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Newark, N.J.

Governor Murphy Signs "Linda's Law"

07/5/2019

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy today signed ACS for A4430 and A4555, also known as "Linda's Law," which will require electric public utility companies to verify with all residential customers whether anyone at the residence uses life-sustaining equipment powered by electricity. The legislation is in response to the death of Linda Daniels, a resident of Newark who lost her life when her oxygen tank lost power after her electricity was shut off.

"No one should fear losing their life because their electricity bill is a few days overdue," said **Governor Murphy**. "Linda's Law will protect residents who rely upon electricity to support their medical equipment."

Linda's Law will prohibit electric public utilities from discontinuing service for 90 days due to nonpayment for medical customers who rely on electric-powered medical equipment to survive. Utilities shall request information as to whether any residential customer qualifies as a medical customer on a semi-annual basis.

"On this anniversary of the tragic death of Linda Daniels, thank you to Governor Murphy and the Legislature for passing Linda's Law," said **New Jersey Board of Public Utilities President Joseph L. Fiordaliso**. "The NJBPU has been working closely with the utilities to implement additional regulations that we hope, along with this legislation, will help prevent future tragedies. Our ongoing condolences to her family."

"One year ago, Linda Daniels lost her life when her electricity was shut off and the oxygen mask that she desperately needed lost power," said **Newark Mayor Ras Baraka**. "For seven hours, in the middle of a heat wave, she gasped for breath. A year later, a family is still mourning the loss of a 68-year-old mother and grandmother, who had much more life to give her family and community. We must continue to keep them in prayer and have trust that Linda's death will not be in vain. Out of this tragic loss, "Linda's Law" will protect and support those that need it the most regardless of their ability to afford it."

"It is clear that more needs to be done to ensure that those depending on electricity for their medical device do not experience a shut-off in their home," said **Assemblymembers Yvonne Lopez, Raj Mukherji, Eliana Pintor Marin, Wayne DeAngelo, James Kennedy, and Lisa Swain**. "We need to ensure that electric public utilities have a comprehensive system to not only track, but also meet the needs of their medically dependent customers. We know that BPU regulations consider temperature as well as other factors prior to ordering a shut-off, however, the health of our most vulnerable populations must also be made a priority factor in determining a discontinuation of service."

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"Being late on your bills should not be life-threatening," said **Senator Joseph Vitale**. "Unfortunately for Linda Daniels, discontinuing power to her home cut off her oxygen. This should never have been acceptable in America, and certainly not in New Jersey. No number of missed utility payments should ever have been lethal and hopefully with this legislation, it will never be again."

"Many people rely on electricity to power life-sustaining medical equipment within their homes," said **Senator**

Linda Greenstein. "These individuals must be protected from potential energy shut-offs and must be provided leniency by their energy suppliers. No person's electricity should determine life or death."

"The inability to pay an electric bill should not have deadly consequences, but what happens when power is cut off to someone using life sustaining medical equipment," **said Senator Teresa Ruiz.** "This legislation will expand precautions already in place to ensure power companies are not risking anyone's life when they discontinue services to a customer past due on their bill."

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