



## State of Connecticut

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#### COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & TECHNOLOGY 2/10/09

#### **HB 5052: AN ACT PROHIBITING UTILITY COMPANY SURCHARGES FOR CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS**

**GOOD MORNING SENATOR FONFARA, REPRESENTATIVE NARDELLO AND MEMBERS OF THE ENERGY & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE. I AM REPRESENTATIVE CLAIRE JANOWSKI FROM THE 56<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT OF VERNON & ROCKVILLE.**

**I AM PLEASED TO SPEAK IN SUPPORT OF BILL HB 5052, AN ACT PROHIBITING UTILITY COMPANY SURCHARGES ON UTILITY CUSTOMERS BASED ON PAYMENT METHOD. I INTRODUCED THE LEGISLATION FOLLOWING MY OWN PERSONAL EXPERIENCE TO PAY A UTILITY BILL BY CREDIT CARD AND WAS SHOCKED WHEN TOLD THAT I WOULD NEED TO DO THAT THROUGH A VENDOR HIRED BY THE COMPANY SUBJECT TO A FEE.**

**IRONICALLY, I NEVER PAY MY UTILITIES BY CREDIT CARD, BUT DECIDED TO DO SO IN ORDER TO MEET A 1<sup>ST</sup> OF THE MONTH DUE DATE PAYMENT AND AVOID PAYING A LATE FEE AS THE DIRECT DEPOSIT TO MY CHECKING WOULD NOT GO INTO MY ACCOUNT UNTIL SOMETIME AROUND THE 7<sup>TH</sup> OF THE MONTH. IN ALL THE YEARS I HAVE USED A CREDIT CARD – FOR GROCERIES, GAS, RETAIL PURCHASES, TRAVEL, RESTAURANTS – AT SMALL, MEDIUM OR LARGE ESTABLISHMENTS - NO OTHER “FOR PROFIT BUSINESS” HAS EVER CHARGED ME A FEE FOR PURCHASING OR PAYING FOR THEIR PRODUCT OR SERVICE BY CREDIT CARD. FOR UTILITY COMPANIES, WHO PROVIDE NEEDED SERVICES, TO PASS THIS “NORMAL COST OF DOING BUSINESS” TO CONSUMERS IS UNCONSCIONABLE.**

**IN TODAY’S ECONOMIC TIMES WHEN MANY FAMILIES ARE STRUGGLING TO MAKE ENDS MEET, PAYING BY CREDIT CARD IS NOT A CONVENIENCE OR A LUXURY THAT SHOULD BE SUBJECT TO A FEE. FOR MANY, IT HAS BECOME A NECESSITY TO ACQUIRE AND PAY FOR BASIC NEEDS INCLUDING UTILITIES SERVICES NEEDED FOR HEAT, HOT WATER, ELECTRICITY, DRINKING WATER, WASHING, COOKING AND MORE.**

**THIS BILL WILL PROTECT CONSUMERS FROM THIS ABUSIVE PRACTICE AND ALLOW THE USAGE OF CREDIT CARDS AS A METHOD OF PAYING UTILITY BILLS WITHOUT SURCHARGES EMPLOYED BY UTILITY COMPANIES. I URGE ADOPTION.**