



National Multiple Sclerosis Society
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Energy and Technology Public Hearing
February 20, 2014

Testimony in Opposition to
SB 110, AN ACT CONCERNING FRAUD PREVENTION IN
CONNECTICUT'S UTILITY TERMINATION PROTECTION PROGRAMS.

Senator Duff, Representative Reed, Senator LeBeau, Representative Steinberg,
Senator Chapin, Representative Hoydick and Members of the Energy and Technology
Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Susan Raimondo and I am the
Senior Director of Advocacy and Programs for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society,
Connecticut Chapter.

**We are asking that the Energy and Technology Committee reject SB 110, An Act
Concerning Fraud Prevention in Connecticut's Utility Termination Protection
Programs.**

The legislation which defines "serious illness" as those that are "life-threatening"
disregards many illnesses, including those that can be exacerbated by temperature
extremes, those which need refrigeration of medications, and those that for medical
reasons require sustaining equipment, such as a CPAP, suction, motorized
wheelchairs, etc.

The bill is also concerning because it is making the application process for hardship
relief more difficult and it imposes an asset test for those who are living with serious
illnesses. Receiving shut off protection does not remove an individual's responsibility to
pay their utility bill.

Restrictive shut off policies intended to save costs will create unintended hardship for
those with heat-and-cold exacerbated illnesses like multiple sclerosis. The policies
could lead to increases in health care costs and increased work absenteeism.

In the case of MS, lack of access to electricity for air conditioning, especially during the
extremes of summer, will lead to exacerbations and progression of disease. The impact

of increased body temperature in MS can lead to blindness and paralysis. These changes can result in a person's inability to work or participate in one's community and will undoubtedly increase the utilization and costs of health care.

Connecticut already has some of the highest utility costs in the nation. According to Mint.com, the national average for a monthly utility bill is \$163; in Connecticut, it's \$206.

We urge the Energy and Technology Committee to adopt a definition of serious illness to include: individuals with a life threatening illness, a medical condition in which low or high temperatures could further debilitate the individual or exacerbate the disease, those which need refrigeration of medications or who for medical reasons depends on sustaining equipment, such as a CPAP, suction, motorized medical equipment, etc.”

We are asking that the Energy and Technology Committee reject SB 110, An Act Concerning Fraud Prevention in Connecticut's Utility Termination Protection Programs.

Thank you.