

2016 -- S 2714

LC005239

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2016

A N A C T

RELATING TO CRIMINAL OFFENSES -- PUBLIC UTILITIES

Introduced By: Senators DaPonte, and Gallo

Date Introduced: March 08, 2016

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

SECTION 1. Chapter 11-35 of the General Laws entitled "Public Utilities" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

11-35-20.1. Wrongful termination or disruption of service. -- (a) Any person who has been served an order issued pursuant to chapter 8.1 of title 8, or chapters 5 or 15 of title 15 who causes the interruption of any utility service by false presentation or other means at the residence of the person(s) protected by a protective order issued pursuant to chapter 8.1 of title 8, or chapters 5 or 15 of title 15 shall constitute harassment.

(b) Any person subject to an order issued pursuant to chapter 8.1 of title 8, or chapters 5 or 15 of title 15 who wishes to remove their name from a utility bill and terminate their future financial responsibility for making payments on that bill must first seek approval from the court which issued the protective order.

(1) The court shall not allow any person, upon their own motion, to remove their name from a utility bill and terminate their financial responsibility with respect to the utility bill without first ensuring that the preexisting balance owed to the utility has been satisfied and that the person(s) covered by the protective order is able to establish an account under their own name without the need to make a deposit that causes hardship, and are capable of fulfilling their financial obligations towards the utility in the future.

(c) Nothing in this section shall prevent a person protected by an order issued pursuant to chapter 8.1 of title 8, or chapters 5 or 15 of title 15 from transferring a utility bill into their name

1 and assuming any and all obligations to the utility.
2 (d) Any person who shall wrongfully terminate or disrupt any utility service in violation
3 of this section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to a fine not exceeding five hundred
4 dollars (\$500).

5 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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- 1 This act would prohibit individuals served with protective orders in domestic
- 2 abuse/domestic assault matters from terminating or disrupting utility service without prior court
- 3 approval.
- 4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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