

2016 -- S 2714 SUBSTITUTE A

LC005239/SUB A

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:

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

3 **11-35-20.1. Wrongful termination or disruption of service. -- (a) Any person who has**
4 **been served an order issued pursuant to chapter 8.1 of title 8, or chapters 5 or 15 of title 15 who**
5 **causes the interruption of any utility service by false presentation or other means at the residence**
6 **of the person(s) protected by a protective order issued pursuant to chapter 8.1 of title 8, or**
7 **chapters 5 or 15 of title 15 shall constitute harassment.**

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

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

18 **(c) Nothing in this section shall prevent a person protected by an order issued pursuant to**
19 **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 violation 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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