

Finance Committee

SB 685

Support Bill

Cancer Support Foundation
Cindy Carter Executive Director

I am Executive Director of Cancer Support Foundation and here to speak for our clients as well as all of those who are facing medical challenges.

Since 2015 I have worked with a program that has now become law called the Critical Medical Needs Program. This program helps anyone with a medical challenge have assistance in the application process for help with their electric and heating bill.

We are dealing with people who are fighting for their lives. We are dealing with people who can barely manage everyday challenges and are facing their power turned off. We are dealing with people who see bills like the one on this slide. You can see that this person was charged more than if they were not on this service.

Many of these patients apply to the Office of Home Energy Program (OHEP) for assistance with their bills. The purpose of OHEP is to provide assistance to low income families towards their electric and heating bills to help keep their power and heat on.

Because of the inflated bills due to the higher than stand offer service rates of many of the third-party suppliers, many of these families are left with large balances after the grants then they would if not on third-party rates. The result is Office of Home Energy Program's effectiveness is diluted.

Families are then having to turn to other resources to get help which leads to a domino effect for other resources running out of funds and families being turned away. Many of these families will have their service terminated.

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To me it is a misuse of public and private funding to pay for bills that are for services charged at a higher rate than stand offer services.

Cancer Support Foundation supports SB 685 to not allow third-party suppliers who do not offer at or below standard offer services rates to enroll those who use Office of Home Energy Program funds to help with the bills.