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R. I. Public Utilities Commission  
89 Jefferson Blvd.  
Warwick, R.I. 02888

Re: Docket No. 3876

I am an interested party and member of the public wishing to offer my view and argument regarding three (3) significant changes to the rules and regulations that govern public utilities in Rhode Island.

First, it will serve neither the ratepayers nor the public at large to remove the ability of the utility company to negotiate an individual payment plan with a customer. This will only serve to further burden both the hearing process and the utility customer who is already facing a hardship, by removing the option of a mutually-negotiated resolution.

Second, the Commission should not vote to remove its own ability to order immediate restoration of utility service to a customer. There is, and needs to be, accountability on the part of the Commissioners. You have been entrusted by the Governor, with consent of the Senate, to regulate a vital service to our citizens and must be able to utilize every means available to ensure that due process is upheld.

Third, if the Commission votes to remove the ability of a utility customer facing termination of service the right to representation by a non-lawyer advocate, you will have essentially removed the right of that person to any representation. The Attorney General's office has repeatedly insisted that they have neither the resources nor the responsibility to assist victims of termination notices, and when people are unable to pay their utility bills in full they obviously cannot afford to pay an attorney. As far as the legal argument in favor of such a rule change is concerned, it bears noting that both informal and formal hearings are regularly held not before the Commission but the Division.

Please do not approve the above rule changes, as the people who are in need of assistance have enough obstacles in their way as it is, without your manufacturing more.

*Lorraine L. Burns*

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2007 OCT 31 PM 1:30  
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www.georgewileycenter.org

32 East Avenue  
Pawtucket, Rhode Island 02860  
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Fax: 401.725.1020



Coordinates the Rhode Island Campaign to Eliminate Childhood Poverty





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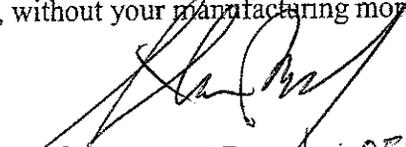
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Stan Israh SEIU

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