

# SUPPORT HB664

Topic: Disconnection delays for vulnerable households

Bill Patron: Delegate Kory

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## Reasons to support HB664:

- Virginia currently has among the weakest utility disconnection protections for customers of any state in the southeast – including customers who are vulnerable or medically compromised.
- It is critical to provide life-saving support for community members like the elderly, infants, and those who have medical conditions and/or disabilities. This bill protects access to essential utility services – water and power – for people who are socially and medically vulnerable.
- Some of our neighbors most impacted and financially burdened by utility bills are those in low-income families and communities of color. Black households are the most impacted by energy burdens and utility hardship—Black households are three times more likely to experience a utility service shut-off than non-blacks (15% versus 4%). This bill expands protections for families financially burdened by utility bills in times of crisis.
- Utility reports with information related to serious medical condition exemption can help us understand the state of utility disconnections in Virginia.

## Overview:

This bill expands protections by extending the existing delay from service termination for serious medical conditions by (a) extending this delay to *all* electric, gas and water utilities, and (b) including households where primary residents are 65 and older, 12 months and under, or who have a disability to delay disconnection by 60 days following the notice of service termination for non-payment. The bill also increases the right of a customer to seek delays based on these medical and socially vulnerable exemptions from 2 to 3 times in a 12-month period, and requires utilities to report on the number of delays granted.



**Virginia Interfaith Power  
& Light**

Kidest Gebre  
kgebre@vaip.org  
vaip.org



**Virginia Conservation Network**

[vcn@vcnva.org](mailto:vcn@vcnva.org)  
(804) 644-0283  
[www.VCNVA.org](http://www.VCNVA.org)