

## HB2283: Disconnection suspensions for certain utilities ; state of emergency, residential customers

Cornerstones strongly supports **H.B.2283**, introduced by **Delegate Shin**. This commonsense bill provides **vital protection for vulnerable individuals and families against losing essential public utilities during a state of emergency**. It allows residents to keep heat or air conditioning in their homes during extreme weather emergencies, regardless of their ability to pay.

Each year, Cornerstones provides support and advocacy for over 16,000 individuals and families in need. Our services include affordable rental housing, financial assistance for rent and utilities, winter hypothermia prevention and summer cooling centers. We know well that **loss of utilities during a crisis can be life-threatening**.

The pandemic highlighted the vulnerability of too many members of our community when a crisis hit – and fell hardest on seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income working families.

We are proud of the Commonwealth's extraordinary response to support residents, businesses, institutions and communities during the pandemic. Our state level leaders understood the crisis, and enabled organizations like ours to offer a safety net.

After any crisis, it is important to review lessons learned in order to plan ahead and mitigate future public health impacts.

H.B.2283 does just that by offering a commonsense bill that would prevent shut-offs in the event of a sustained public emergency declared by our Governor.

Please be proactive in strengthening our emergency planning. This will help prevent unnecessary burden on emergency responders so that the resources of communities and the Commonwealth remain focused on the larger emergency.