



# The Preventing Unnecessary Deaths During Life-Threatening Events Act

As our climate changes, communities across the country are experiencing more extreme temperatures, resulting in higher energy bills and shut-off warnings for those who fail to pay. Last summer, regions across the United States faced unprecedented heatwaves with record shattering temperatures in the triple digits. In June 2022, nearly 21.8 million people were at risk of experiencing five or more extremely hot days. As extreme heat events become more common due to climate change, deadly heat waves could impact more than 106 million Americans throughout the United States in the next 30 years.

- Studies have shown that extreme heat has led to an average of more than 1,300 premature deaths in the United States each year and that for every additional day of extreme heat per month, there are seven additional deaths per 10 million people.
- High temperatures can degrade the effectiveness of prescription drugs, making it critical that during extreme heat events, households retain access to electricity to ensure life-saving medications can be refrigerated and stored adequately.
- Extreme cold weather events were responsible for over 6,600 deaths during a 4-year period.

## HIGH ENERGY COSTS HURT FAMILIES ABILITY TO PAY BILLS, DISPROPORTIONATELY IMPACT BIPOC FAMILIES

- Over one in six households (more than 20 million families) are estimated to be behind on their utility bills.
- Households currently owe an average of \$800, double the pre-pandemic amount.
- Black households are twice as likely as white households to face utilities shutoff after receiving a disconnection notice.

## LESS THAN HALF OF ALL STATES HAVE PROCEDURES TO PROTECT FAMILIES DURING EXTREME HEAT AND COLD WEATHER EVENTS

- 19 states currently have shutoff moratoriums for both extreme cold and heat weather events.
- 22 states have only cold weather shutoffs moratoriums.
- 9 states have policies for neither.

## THE SOLUTION: AMEND PURPA TO PREVENT DISCONNECTIONS DURING EXTREME HEAT AND COLD WEATHER EVENTS

Currently, the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act (PURPA) requires states to establish policies preventing shutoffs for nonpayment when doing so would be dangerous to the consumer's health. Our legislation would clarify PURPA's termination of service procedures to include extreme hot and cold weather events as periods when termination of service would be detrimental to health. It would help ensure that all states put in place these life-saving utility shutoff policies.

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