

**2016 -- H 7459 SUBSTITUTE A**

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LC004005/SUB A  
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**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND**

**IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2016**

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A N A C T

RELATING TO CRIMINAL OFFENSES -- PUBLIC UTILITIES

Introduced By: Representatives Amore, Costa, Fogarty, Maldonado, and Kazarian

Date Introduced: February 04, 2016

Referred To: House Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1           SECTION 1. Chapter 11-35 of the General Laws entitled "Public Utilities" is hereby  
2 amended by adding thereto the following section:

3           **11-35-20.1. Wrongful termination or disruption of service. -- (a) Any person who has**  
4 **been served an order issued pursuant to chapter 8.1 of title 8, or chapters 5 or 15 of title 15 who**  
5 **causes the interruption of any utility service by false presentation or other means at the residence**  
6 **of the person(s) protected by a protective order issued pursuant to chapter 8.1 of title 8, or**  
7 **chapters 5 or 15 of title 15 shall constitute harassment.**

8           **(b) Any person subject to an order issued pursuant to chapter 8.1 of title 8, or chapters 5**  
9 **or 15 of title 15 who wishes to remove their name from a utility bill and terminate their future**  
10 **financial responsibility for making payments on that bill must first seek approval from the court**  
11 **which issued the protective order.**

12           **(1) The court shall not allow any person, upon their own motion, to remove their name**  
13 **from a utility bill and terminate their financial responsibility with respect to the utility bill without**  
14 **first ensuring that the preexisting balance owed to the utility has been satisfied and that the**  
15 **person(s) covered by the protective order is able to establish an account under their own name**  
16 **without the need to make a deposit that causes hardship, and are capable of fulfilling their**  
17 **financial obligations towards the utility in the future.**

18           **(c) Nothing in this section shall prevent a person protected by an order issued pursuant to**  
19 **chapter 8.1 of title 8, or chapters 5 or 15 of title 15 from transferring a utility bill into their name**

1 and assuming any and all obligations to the utility.

2 (d) Any person who shall wrongfully terminate or disrupt any utility service in violation  
3 of this section shall be guilty of a violation and subject to a fine not exceeding five hundred  
4 dollars (\$500).

5 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

A N A C T  
RELATING TO CRIMINAL OFFENSES -- PUBLIC UTILITIES

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1           This act would prohibit individuals served with protective orders in domestic  
2 abuse/domestic assault matters from terminating or disrupting utility service without prior court  
3 approval.

4           This act would take effect upon passage.

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