

By: Senator(s) Walls

To: Public Utilities

SENATE BILL NO. 2888

1 AN ACT TO REQUIRE ANY UTILITY SUPPLYING HEAT-RELATED SERVICE  
2 TO ATTEMPT TO CONTACT PERSONALLY AN ADULT RESIDENT OF THE PREMISES  
3 BEFORE A SCHEDULED SUSPENSION, DISCONNECTION OR TERMINATION; IF  
4 PERSONAL CONTACT IS MADE, THE CUSTOMER MUST BE GIVEN AN  
5 OPPORTUNITY FOR A PERSONAL CONFERENCE TO RESOLVE THE SUSPENSION,  
6 DISCONNECTION OR TERMINATION; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

8 **SECTION 1.** (1) For cold weather periods (between November  
9 15th and April 1st), any utility supplying heat-related service  
10 shall attempt to contact personally an adult resident of the  
11 premises at least seventy-two (72) hours before a scheduled  
12 suspension, disconnection or termination. If two (2) attempts at  
13 contact by phone are unsuccessful, an on-site personal visit must  
14 be made. Personal contact also must be attempted at the time of  
15 termination.

16 (2) "Heat related service" includes service necessary to  
17 operate the heating system or a supplemental heating device, if  
18 the customer has notified the utility within the past year that  
19 the use of such a device is necessary because the landlord  
20 provides inadequate heat.

21 (3) If personal contact is made, the customer must be given  
22 an opportunity for a personal conference to resolve the  
23 suspension, disconnection or termination. Such personal  
24 conference shall include an opportunity to negotiate a partial or  
25 reduced payment of any unpaid bill.

26 (4) If, after diligent effort, no personal contact can be  
27 made before actual suspension, disconnection or termination, an  
28 attempt must be made by the utility to ascertain, by personal  
29 inspection, whether the premises are occupied and whether a

30 serious impairment to health or safety is likely to result.

31 (5) Service shall not be terminated, disconnected or  
32 suspended if it appears that any resident would suffer a serious  
33 impairment to health or safety. In such situations, the utility  
34 shall transmit an oral or written notification to the local social  
35 services agency that explains fully the nature of the serious  
36 impairment to health or safety, including the basis for the  
37 determination that the customer is unable to protect himself or  
38 herself from neglect or hazardous situations without assistance  
39 from others.

40 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
41 and after July 1, 2007.