

TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF SB628

February, 21, 2020

I am here in support of SB628.

This bill will relieve the stress for many widows, who like me, often find to their surprise that their names are not included on the various accounts they and their spouses have had for years. For so many widows, the first 6 months after their loss becomes a nightmare of sorting through finances and notifying various entities of their spouse's death.

I was confounded that the utility companies (Pepco and Washington Gas) would not let me simply change the name on the account, even though I was a co-owner of all the properties we had lived in for the 53 years we had been married. So I had to go through the process of opening new accounts with these companies. With this bill, a widowed spouse need only show marriage and death certificates to continue an account.

This bill will also resolve other issues. When couldn't continue the account, I realized that all our on-time bills over the years had done nothing for my credit status. Moreover, in calculating discounts, the Verizon rep recently said, "I see you've been our customer for 2 years."

To add insult to injury, Washington Gas wanted a deposit for the new account. I asked to speak with a manager and got the deposit rescinded, but it occurred to me that if this was happening to me, it was happening to others. So I contacted Senator Kagan to see if we could save surviving spouses the added burden of having to open new utility accounts. After a call from Senator Kagan, a Washington Gas supervisor apologized to me and promised to talk to call center workers. Nonetheless, I hope we can get something more solid in place to protect grieving spouses. Thank you for your consideration.

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