



Michele Potter, MPA
Executive Director
Direct: 301-216-4038
Fax: 301-216-4054
mpotter@asbury.org

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Re: SB628: Utilities – Surviving Spouse of Account Holder – Protections

To Whom It May Concern:

I am the Executive Director of Asbury Methodist Village in Montgomery County, Maryland. We serve approximately 1500 older adults, who are active, vibrant residents of our community.

I have learned about an upcoming Hearing on a bill: **SB628: Utilities – Surviving Spouse of Account Holder – Protections**, and I have shared the information with our residents.

Currently, it is a lengthy and frustrating process for the surviving spouse to have a public utilities account changed into their name. Grieving widows or widowers should be able to easily transfer utility accounts in a straightforward process.

I personally feel strongly about this because of the difficulties I had when my Father passed away 8 years ago, assisting my Mother through this process. It took many months to work through the procedures to get it right.

This bill will implement a policy that allows the surviving spouse to provide a copy of the marriage and death certificates to add their name on the current account. This common-sense solution would simplify the process for those going through a loss and ensure that they do not have to navigate needless bureaucratic procedures.

Despite the fact that every residential utility ratepayer will die eventually, no statute, regulation, FAQ, webpage, or another resource that we could find for Maryland's major utilities (PEPCO, BGE, WSSC) even mentions the process for post-death account holder changes.

SB628 would improve the customer experience and process of transferring account holder information in the event of a deceased spouse. There should be flexibility to extend the period of time during which a deposit can be paid or waive the deposit. Ideally, new customers should be asked in every instance whether there is a spouse/partner, that should be on the account.

I strongly urge a favorable report of SB628.

Sincerely,

Michele R. Potter
Executive Director