

Kandie Cleaves
Garland
LD 3

December 21, 2022

"LD 3 An Act to Establish the Winter Energy Relief Payment Program to Aid Residents with High Heating Costs and to Finalize the COVID Pandemic Relief Payment Program"

Good afternoon, Senator Jackson, Representative Talbot-Ross, and Honorable members of the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs Services:

I'm Kandie Cleaves of Garland and I offer this testimony Neither for Nor Against LD 3. Having spent years living in abject poverty my heart goes out to everyone who is still at that point and attempting to survive with our current market issues. Currently my husband and I make enough to be out of range to qualify for basic assistance programs, however if our home wasn't paid for, we wouldn't be able to make our monthly income stretch far enough to cover a rent/mortgage, utilities, food and medical. Even without a mortgage, we find ourselves having to draw money out of our small savings to cover costs. The extra help this bill would provide would be useful to us, and many others. When people run out of heat, they frequently turn to unsafe sources to stay warm or end up taking risky measures to thaw frozen pipes, this has cost lives.

There is one issue in this bill that I do have, the nearly 35 million dollars that will be coming out of funding originally allocated to adult Developmental Disability Home and Community Based Waiver services.

I identify as an individual with physical, mental, and developmental disabilities. During the Home and Community Based Settings evaluation process I was one of the Validators. During that time, I became more aware than ever of the hardships my peers go through to get needed services. Our state got a very late start in the validation process and shortly after it started COVID created issues, added to the already low pay concerns there is a substantial crisis in serving those requiring HCBS services and being able to come into compliance as well as many still languishing on waitlists. To take money from those who are often the most vulnerable is not where our state should be looking to find money. Finding funds that are not coming from services meant for those living in poverty should be at the top of the list if not, reducing the income limit for those receiving the benefit needs to be considered.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Kandie Cleaves
Garland