

- SUBJECT:** Expanding eligibility for certain bill payment assistance programs
- COMMITTEE:** State Affairs — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 12 ayes — Cook, Giddings, Craddick, Farrar, Guillen, K. King, Kuempel, Meyer, Oliveira, Paddie, E. Rodriguez, Smithee
- 0 nays
- 1 absent — Geren
- WITNESSES:** For — Maria Garcia, CPS Energy; Robert Puente, San Antonio Water System (SAWS); (*Registered, but did not testify:* Megan Dodge, City of San Antonio; Donovan Burton and Hope Wells, San Antonio Water System (SAWS); Jennifer Allmon, Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops; Walt Baum, Texas Public Power Association)
- Against — None
- BACKGROUND:** Government Code, sec. 1502.056(a) makes utility customers of municipally owned utilities eligible for bill payment assistance in municipalities of more than one million but less than two million if they are low-income and have been threatened with disconnection from service for nonpayment of bills.
- Some observers note that low-income families who are customers of the municipally owned utility systems in San Antonio, CPS Energy and the San Antonio Water System, are ineligible for the utilities' bill payment assistance programs unless they have been threatened with disconnection due to nonpayment of bills.
- DIGEST:** HB 1633 would make low-income utility customers of municipally owned utilities eligible for bill payment assistance in municipalities of more than 1 million but less than 2 million regardless of whether they had been threatened with disconnection from service for nonpayment of bills.

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The bill would take effect September 1, 2017.

NOTES:

A companion bill, SB 758 by Menéndez, was approved by the Senate on March 30 and reported favorably from the House Committee on State Affairs on May 1.