



MEMORANDUM IN OPPOSITION

S.6275-A (Parker)

AN ACT to amend the public service law, in relation to establishing arrears resolution programs

The Capital Region Chamber, representing 2,900 businesses and organizations from throughout the Capital Region that employ more than 160,000 area residents, opposes S.6275-A, which would require utility corporations to establish an arrears resolution program for residential and small business customers and/or ratepayers that experienced a change in financial circumstances due to the COVID-19 state of emergency.

This bill would forgive any utility, water, telephone, and broad band arrears accumulated between February 1, 2020 and March 31, 2022. The bill provides that the state would be responsible for 50% of the arrears using federal funds which may or may not be available for such purposes. Providers would be responsible for the remaining 50%.

The only qualification to benefit from this program would be that the customer experienced a change in financial circumstances during the pandemic. This is overly broad and would allow many New Yorkers to apply for forgiveness even though such relief may not be truly necessary. New Yorkers have already been provided significant relief via the state's service termination moratorium throughout the pandemic, federally supplemented unemployment insurance benefits, federal grants and loans, and federal stimulus payments. Consequently, the relief that this bill would attempt to provide is no longer necessary.

Taxpayers and service providers should not be forced to pay the debts of individuals who used certain services.

For these stated reasons, the Capital Region Chamber opposes this legislation.

Date Issued: May 10, 2021

**UNITED TO DRIVE ECONOMIC PROSPERITY WITH
ONE VOICE, ONE MISSION, ONE REGION.**

capitalregionchamber.com | 518.431.1400