



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kevin S. Parker

## Senator Parker Introduces Legislative Package to Modernize Utility Processes and Safeguard Ratepayers

JACINTA OSBORNE February 4, 2025

**BROOKLYN, NY** – Senator Kevin Parker, Chair of the Senate Energy and Telecommunications Committee, led the passage of critical legislation to further protect ratepayers across New York State. This landmark legislative package directly responds to New York's affordability crisis and continues the Senate Democratic Majority's work to prioritize consumers' interests while holding utility companies accountable.

Senator Parker's leadership has brought the legislation to the Senate floor, highlighting his ongoing commitment to putting New York's working families first. He is now fighting to ensure the package moves swiftly through the Assembly and reaches the Governor's desk. This package represents Senator Parker's comprehensive approach to addressing the failures of utilities and power producers, ensuring fair and affordable access to utilities for all New Yorkers.

"The affordability of utilities is not a luxury; it's a basic right that we must protect for every New Yorker," said Senator Kevin Parker. "I am proud to have led the effort to get this legislation to the Senate floor and to continue the fight for our most vulnerable communities. As utility costs rise, this package ensures no New Yorker is left behind and holds utility companies accountable for their failures. We will continue working to get this

legislation to the Governor's desk and make a tangible difference in the lives of all New Yorkers."

The package of bills includes:

- Utility Hikes Economic Impact (S.1847): Sponsored by Senator Leroy Comrie, this bill would require the Public Service Commission (PSC) to evaluate the economic impact of proposed utility rate hikes, ensuring that any potential increases are balanced with the economic realities faced by consumers.
- The Consumer Utility Protections During Investigations (CUPDI) Act (S.904): Sponsored by Senator Kristen Gonzalez, this bill protects utility customers from service terminations and late fees while the PSC investigates a utility company's practices. It also requires customers to be notified of any ongoing investigations.
- Limiting Estimated Billing (S.2182): Sponsored by Senator Michelle Hinchey, this bill mandates utility companies to perform actual meter readings, preventing consumers from being charged based on estimated bills and ensuring they only pay for what they owe.
- Strengthening Utility Storm Response and Compliance (S.1701): Sponsored by Senator Shelley Mayer, this bill would incentivize better regulatory compliance by utility companies in their storm response efforts and increase penalties for utilities that fail to meet compliance standards.
- Utilities to Adopt the Common Equity Ratio (S.1896): Sponsored by Senator Shelley Mayer, this bill would require electric, gas, steam, and water corporations to apply standardized return on equity calculations set by the PSC to ensure fairness in rate setting.

- Limits Fixed Charges (S.1329): Sponsored by Senator Kevin Parker, this bill directs the Department of Public Service to adjust utility corporations' fixed residential charges to cover only the direct costs related to metering, billing, service connections, and customer service operations.
- Establishing Affordable Payment Plans for Eligible Utility Customers (S.1330): Sponsored by Senator Kevin Parker, this bill establishes a statewide program that mandates utility companies offer affordable payment plans for individuals enrolled in social service programs, ensuring that low-income New Yorkers can maintain access to essential utilities.
- Establishing Minimum Standards for Payment Plans for Eligible Utility Customers (S.1327): Sponsored by Senator Kevin Parker, this bill requires the PSC to set clear standards and eligibility requirements for affordable payment plans, ensuring consistency across the state.
- Home Energy Assistance Re-enrollment (S.1966): Sponsored by Senator Chris Ryan, this bill ensures that low-income households automatically re-enroll in the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) if they remain eligible, reducing barriers to continued support.

Through this package of legislation, Senator Kevin Parker is pushing for a comprehensive overhaul of utility regulations that will protect consumers, increase transparency, and ensure affordable access to utilities for all New Yorkers. With the Senate's approval, Senator Parker now turns his attention to securing swift passage in the Assembly and ensuring that the Governor signs these crucial pieces of legislation into law.

About State Senator Kevin Parker:

Senator Kevin S. Parker is intimately familiar with the needs of his ethnically diverse Brooklyn district comprising sections of Flatbush, East Flatbush, Kensington, Ditmas Park, Midwood, Flatlands, Canarsie, Georgetown, Old Mill Basin, Mill Basin, Marine Park, and Bergen Beach. A lifelong Brooklyn resident, he is the Chairman of the Senate Energy and Telecommunications Committee and sits on the Senate Finance; Rules; Banks; Internet and Technology; Rules; and Budget and Revenue.