

1 H.214

2 Introduced by Representative Pugh of S. Burlington

3 Referred to Committee on

4 Date:

5 Subject: Human services; LIHEAP; fuel assistance; eligibility; expansion

6 Statement of purpose: This bill proposes to expand eligibility for fuel
7 assistance.

8 An act relating to expanding eligibility for fuel assistance

9 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

10 Sec. 1. 33 V.S.A. § 2604(a) is amended to read:

11 (a) Household income eligibility requirements. The secretary, by rule,
12 shall establish household income and asset eligibility requirements of
13 beneficiaries in the seasonal fuel assistance program including the income and
14 assets of all residents of the household.

15 (1) The income eligibility requirements shall require that households
16 have a net household income no greater than ~~125~~ 150 percent of the federal
17 poverty level in order to be potentially eligible for benefits. Net income shall
18 be derived by making the following deductions from gross income: 20 percent
19 of household members' gross earned income; 100 percent of federal or state

1 earned income credits received by household members; dependent care
2 expenses that are within an allowable maximum, paid by a household member,
3 and necessary to support a household member's employment or training for
4 employment, according to criteria established by the secretary by rule; child
5 support or alimony payments made by a household member on behalf of a
6 nonhousehold member that meet criteria established by the secretary by rule;
7 ~~\$150.00~~ \$250.00 for each household member who is 60 years of age or older
8 or disabled according to criteria established by the secretary by rule; any
9 deductions or exclusions required by federal law or regulations; and any other
10 deduction or exclusion established by the secretary by rule.

11 (2) In order to be eligible, a household shall have net household
12 assets no greater than \$5,000.00, except that a household with a member who
13 is 60 years of age or older or disabled shall have net household assets no
14 greater than \$10,000.00. The secretary shall establish exclusions from the
15 asset limit by rule.

16 (3) Notwithstanding the eligibility requirements in subdivisions (1) and
17 (2) of this subsection, households with a member who qualifies for a Medicare
18 Savings Program shall be eligible for seasonal fuel assistance.

19 Sec. 2. 33 V.S.A. § 2605(c) is amended to read:

20 (c)(1) Annually, based on the number of eligible households with net
21 household income at or below 125 percent of the federal poverty guidelines

1 that have applied, and for which the cost of heat is not supplied by the
2 landlord, these households' individual incomes and individual annual heating
3 fuel cost, based on the proxy table established pursuant to ~~section~~ subsection
4 2604(b) of this title, the number of eligible households that have applied and
5 for which the cost of heat is supplied by the landlord, the cost of benefits for
6 these households, and the amount of funds available in the home heating fuel
7 assistance trust fund for the purpose of providing annual home heating fuel
8 assistance benefits, the secretary shall, by procedure, set the payment rate that
9 shall be used to determine the amount of annual home heating fuel assistance
10 for which each household for which the cost of heat is not supplied by the
11 landlord qualifies. In no event shall the payment rate be greater than 100
12 percent of the maximum percentage established by rule as required by
13 subsection (b) of this section. The benefit provided under this subdivision
14 shall not exceed 60 percent of the average home heating fuel cost of
15 households with net household income at or below 125 percent of the federal
16 poverty guidelines.

17 (2) If there are sufficient funds in the home heating fuel assistance fund
18 after providing the maximum benefit under subdivision (1) of this subsection,
19 the secretary shall calculate and pay a benefit with the remaining funds to
20 eligible households with net household income above 125 percent and at or

- 1 below 150 percent of the federal poverty guidelines and households with a
- 2 member who qualifies for a Medicare Savings Program.