

TO: Interested parties

FROM: Fight Corporate Monopolies

DATE: October 14th, 2022

**FIGHT**  
CORPORATE  
MONOPOLIES

## Make Utility Monopolies Play By The Rules

With customers around the country feeling the sting of [skyrocketing](#) electric and gas bills, Americans desperately need real action from federal, state, and local leaders to protect them from the unchecked monopoly power exercised by corrupt utility giants.

It's not too late for Democrats to win back working families by denouncing the corrupting influence of corporate greed and exposing Republicans for siding with big corporations. By taking a stand against monopolies, calling out Republican lies and focusing on economic struggles that voters are most concerned about, we have a fighting chance to win this November.

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### **1. Ban utility companies from politics.**

Utility companies are given too much power over consumers and our economy to be trusted with any role in our democratic process. Already, many utility companies are passing the costs of their political activity on to consumers through hidden fees that fund lobbying efforts meant to grow their outsized power and record-breaking profits at the expense of everyday people. To protect American families from this outright corruption, utility companies should be completely banned from all political activity at every level of government, including paid-lobbying efforts, corporate PACs, and contributions from utility executives and owners to politicians or any organizations that participate in politics.

#### **Sample Messaging (Twitter-Friendly)**

- Your utility bill has nothing to do with “supply and demand.” Thanks to billions spent on lobbyists and PACs, big utility companies get away with making the

rest of us pay for their record profits. It should be criminal.

Send me to [X], and I'll make it criminal.

- Utility companies shouldn't be spending millions of dollars buying off our politicians to protect their record profits. Send me to [X], and I'll fight to ban them from our politics for good: No corporate PACs. No campaign contributions. No lobbying.

### **Links and References**

- [14 states urge FERC to tighten accounting rules to prevent utilities from recouping lobbying expenses](#) | Utility Dive
  - [Meet the group lobbying against climate regulations – using your utility bill](#) | Grist
  - [Paying for Utility Politics: How utility ratepayers are forced to fund the Edison Electric Institute and other political organizations](#) | Energy And Policy Institute
  - [FirstEnergy improperly used ratepayer money to fund HB6 dark money efforts](#) | Cleveland.com
  - [California gas utility fined \\$10M for ratepayer money misuse](#) | AP
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## **2. Ban price gouging and cap profits for big utility companies.**

Across the country, state and local governments have granted monopoly or near-monopoly power to utility companies, often allowing them to raise rates without scrutiny and despite the burden on customers. It's time for our leaders across the country to protect American families by banning price gouging and capping profits for monopoly utility companies. Over-earnings by utility companies should be required by law to be returned directly to consumers. Elected officials should investigate price-gouging and empower regulators to take real action to protect American families and refund over-earnings.

### Sample Messaging (Twitter-Friendly)

- While big utility monopolies are jacking up prices for American families, they're raking in record-breaking profits – and our politicians are letting them get away with it. Send me to [X], and I'll fight to freeze rate increases and demand refunds for their price gouging.

### Links and References

- [Pat Ryan TV Ad in New York 19 Special Election](#)
  - [Washington state attorney general opposes Avista's request to increase utility rates](#) | The Spokesman Review
  - [As rates rise for customers, CenterPoint CEO David Lesar's compensation triples](#) | Houston Chronicle
  - [NC could see larger utility bills; Duke blames rise in fuel costs](#) | Public Radio East
  - [Citing "pancaking" of rate increases, Colorado consumer advocates blast Xcel Energy's proposed natural gas hike](#) | Denver Post
  - [Oncor wants to raise your electric bill. They made \\$229M last quarter.](#) | KDFW
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## 3. Outlaw cruel utility disconnections.

In many states, utility companies can disconnect services during extreme temperatures, extreme weather events, and even for American consumers with major health problems. We need to protect American families from these cruel and dangerous disconnections with outright bans and exemptions for consumers who currently rely on utility services. In nearly every other industry, life-threatening actions carry criminal consequences – so to make utility companies comply, they should be made criminally liable for disconnections that threaten the health or safety of any American.

### Sample Messaging (Twitter-Friendly)

- I'm going to say something that shouldn't be controversial, but I doubt you've ever heard a politician say before:

I don't think utility companies should get away with killing people.

### **Links and References**

- [Power shutoffs deepened pandemic toll while utilities collected millions in relief](#) | Energy News Network
  - [Regulators can save lives by protecting medically vulnerable utility users](#) | The Hill
  - [The U.S. safety net was built for cold winters. Hot summers threaten it.](#) | The Washington Post
  - [On 107-Degree Day, APS Cut Power to Stephanie Pullman's Home. She Didn't Live](#) | Phoenix New Times
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## **4. Ban predatory late fees.**

Utilities have too much power over consumers to be able to fairly apply late fees for their services, many of which are necessary for Americans' health, safety, and ability to work. These fees are predatory – they target low income families, Black and Latino families, and trap consumers in debt. These punitive fees should be outright banned, and utility giants should be forced to offer full repayment plans for customers who have fallen behind.

### **Sample Messaging (Twitter-Friendly)**

- Late fees are just another way big corporations try to control us – even as rates skyrocket, and CEOs take home record pay for themselves, utility companies are still preying on Americans just trying to get by. Late fees should be BANNED altogether.

## Links and References

- [Food or power: Energy bill late fees force tough choices](#) | ABC News
- [Inconvenience fee: how Biden is taking on companies' sneaky charges](#) | The Guardian

If you would like a deeper dive, or information about additional message frames and industries, get in touch at: [info@fightcorporatemonopolies.org](mailto:info@fightcorporatemonopolies.org)