



MASW
Since 1901

Missouri Association for Social Welfare

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July 30, 2014

Missouri Public Service Commission
P.O. Box 360
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0360
Attention: Natelle Dietrich
Director of utility Operations

Re: CASE AW-2014-0329

Dear Ms. Dietrich:

Missouri Association for Social Welfare (MASW) founded in 1901, provides leadership, research, education, and advocacy to improve public policy and programs impacting the health and welfare of all Missourians. We are very concerned about Missouri's very lax regulation of the payday loan industry and the terrible consequences that are occurring in families with low incomes because of this.

Therefore we support the proposed rule regarding CASE AW-2014-0329. We believe the Public Service Commission should act to prevent any formal or informal relationship between utility companies and payday lenders.

One out of five non-elderly households in Missouri survives on an annual income of less than \$17,000. These families have no discretionary income and suffer terrible deprivations, including food insecurity and inability to obtain affordable shelter or utilities. They frequently face utility disconnection and may make unwise decisions related to high-interest loans out of their desperation. Some in Section 8 even have leases that are voided if they allow their utilities to lapse. As you can imagine, the fear of utility disconnect in dangerously hot or cold weather could send some to a payday lender for assistance. Once a customer, it may take years to dig out of the high interest rates charged by such companies.

We urge the Missouri Public Service Commission to act now to protect families with low incomes from predatory lenders who are able to exploit the financial woes of such families.

Sincerely,

Jeanette Mott Oxford