

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Blunt, Jetton, Gibbons Seek \$6.1 Million Emergency Supplemental Bill for Utilicare

ST. LOUIS—Gov. Matt Blunt, House Speaker Rod Jetton, and Senate President Pro Tem Michael R. Gibbons came together today to announce their support for a \$6.1 million emergency supplemental bill to fund Utilicare, the state's program to help low-income Missourians pay winter heating bills.

Blunt announced his support for Utilicare after brokering an agreement between the Public Service Commission (PSC) and Missouri Energy Development Association (MEDA) to waive all reconnection fees and suspend deposit requirements for low-income utility consumers.

Blunt has also called on big oil companies to share their record setting profits with Missourians by directing a portion of them to Utilicare and has supported the PSC's request to amend the cold weather rule to provide customers more lenient reconnection terms, prohibit late fees and suspend deposit requirements for qualified customers.

"By funding this program we are maintaining our commitment to protect our states most vulnerable citizens," Gibbons said. "Furthermore, we want to make sure the people of Missouri have clean, plentiful, and affordable energy not just this winter, but for the future as well."

"With energy costs going up this winter, we must do more to provide energy assistance to those who need help paying their heating bills," Jetton said. "No person should have to choose between buying food and heating their home."

"I am pleased to join Speaker Jetton and Senator Gibbons to provide assistance to Missourians struggling to pay high winter heating bills," Blunt said. "I call on members of both parties to get behind our request for state resources to fund this worthwhile program."

Eligible Missourians can sign up for Utilicare and LIHEAP, the federal low-income winter heating bill assistance program, through Local Community Action Agencies on line at <http://www.communityaction.org/CAAServiceAreas.htm>

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