

Summary of the Ratepayer Justice Act and Commercial Power Accountability Act
H.R. 9700 – Introduced by Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur of Ohio on July 15, 2026

THE PROBLEM

For too long, utility companies have operated with virtual impunity when they engage in corruption. When utilities bribe public officials, rig the system, or manipulate regulators to jack up your electric and gas bills, everyday ratepayers are left holding the bag—while executives walk away with bonuses and corporations keep their ill-gotten profits.

The FirstEnergy corruption scandal in Ohio exposed the ugly truth: utility companies paid millions in illegal bribes to pass legislation that forced millions of Ohio families and businesses to pay over \$1 Billion for corporate bailouts the ratepayer never asked for and should not have been forced to pay. Even after corporate corruption was exposed, most ratepayers never received back a penny of their hard-earned money. Instead, the executives enriched themselves. The company kept the ratepayers' money. The politicians pocketed illegal payments. Wall Street, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and the State public utility regulators ignored the increasing safety dangers to the public and the anticompetitive financial costs to the ratepayers. Now, families across Ohio continue to pay the price of this corruption in higher electricity rates.

THE SOLUTION

The Ratepayer Justice Act introduced by Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur of Northwest Ohio creates a new system to make ratepayers whole when utilities engage in corruption that affects consumers' utility bills. When a utility company is caught bribing officials, rigging rate cases, or manipulating the system, this Federal law will:

- Put that money into a new Ratepayer Justice Fund of the U.S. Government dedicated to compensating victims;
- Get money back into the pockets of affected customers through tax credits or direct payments;
- Invest in regions and communities harmed by utility corruption through community restoration grants;
- Claw back the profits and earnings utilities and their corrupt executives made from their corruption and self-dealing corporate executives;
- Claw back the illegal contributions accepted by corrupt politicians enabling taxpayers and ratepayers to get that money back;
- Ensure no one ever again profits from breaking the law at ratepayers' expense; and

- Guarantees mandatory jail time for any utility executive convicted of making a bribe, wire fraud, or conspiracy, and any public official convicted of taking a bribe from anyone associated with, working on behalf of, or representing a utility company.

WHO GETS HELP

Any residential or business customer who paid utility bills to a utility found guilty of corruption during the time the illegal conduct was happening can claim compensation. You will be able to file a claim for such compensation through your annual Federal tax return or request a direct payment. No lawyers are required and no complicated process will thwart you receiving justice. If you were a customer harmed by the corruption, you deserve to be made whole.

Communities that were harmed by corrupt utilities will also be eligible for Federal grants to repair economic damage, fund infrastructure improvements, support small and large businesses, school systems, and medical facilities, and invest in clean energy for the future.

THE BOTTOM LINE

When utility companies cheat, ratepayers should not pay the price. When utility executives get rich by rigging the system, those executives should not get to keep your money. When politicians accept illegal bribes, they should be forced to surrender that money back to the ratepayers from which it came.

The Ratepayer Justice Act is about a simple principle—if you break the law to inflate people’s utility bills, you should be required to give back every penny you stole and with interest.

JUSTICE FOR RATEPAYERS

Enough is enough. It is long past time we put ratepayers first and hold corrupt utilities and their greedy executives to account. It is time for justice. The Ratepayer Justice Act delivers exactly that for hardworking, everyday Americans harmed by utility corruption – real accountability and real consequences for utilities that abuse the public’s trust, just as my constituents and I saw and suffered with the FirstEnergy scandal in Ohio.

Simply put, Congress must act now to address the failures—of State and regulatory authorities, hold corrupt actors in the commercial utility sector accountable, and protect ratepayers, and regional energy production and distribution, from future corruption.