



WATER IS A HUMAN RIGHT ACT

One-Page Summary

Families across our country are struggling to afford safe, sufficient, and reliable water service. In 2016, a nationwide assessment of water shutoffs for non-payment revealed that households across the U.S. are facing an alarming water affordability crisis—an estimated **15 million people in the United States experienced a water shutoff**, a shocking 1 out of every 20 households.

Water shutoffs disproportionately impact cities with higher rates of poverty, unemployment, and people of color. The City of Detroit, for example, shut off water to more than 112,000 households between 2014 and 2018. In 2017 alone, it was estimated that 1 in 10 Detroiters experienced a shutoff. Sadly, this issue spans well beyond Detroit and across the U.S.

When low-income households are charged unaffordable water rates, they are forced to cut back on other expenses needed to lead healthy and productive lives, including rent, food, and medicine. There are other serious social, economic, and health consequences of water shutoffs. People cannot wash their hands or flush their toilets, leading to the spread of diseases. Families are often forced to move or become homeless. Furthermore, twenty-one states consider lack of running water in a home to be child neglect, and water shutoffs have led to children being ripped from their parents and homes.

No person living in the U.S. should be forced to survive without safe and clean water access.

The **Water is a Human Right Act** prohibits water shutoffs to frontline and disproportionately impacted households. This legislation:

- Prohibits water shutoffs to frontline and disproportionately impacted households, which include households who have a member in their family who is:
 - A senior citizen;
 - Under the age of 18;
 - An individual who is a quadriplegic, hemiplegic, paraplegic, or disabled;
 - A pregnant woman;
 - Low-income, and more.
- Ensures robust water affordability protections for households with incomes up to 200% of the federal poverty guidelines.
- Requires the EPA to conduct a study on water shutoffs, water affordability, and discrimination and civil rights related to water access nationwide.

Access to clean, safe, and affordable water is a human rights issues, a public health issue, and quality of life issue. We must act to ensure that safe drinking water is affordable and accessible to all households, regardless of race, income, or zip code.