Gas and Electric Utility Issues in Georgia: A Survey of AARP Members

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Data collected by FGI Research
Report Prepared by Erica L. Dinger, J.D.

Knowledge Management
601 E Street NW
Washington, DC 20049
www.aarp.org/research

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization that helps people 50+ have independence, choice and control in ways that are beneficial and affordable to them and society as a whole. We produce *AARP The Magazine*, published bimonthly; *AARP Bulletin*, our monthly newspaper; *AARP Segunda Juventud*, our bimonthly magazine in Spanish and English; *NRTA Live & Learn*, our quarterly newsletter for 50+ educators; and our website, www.aarp.org. AARP Foundation is our affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. We have staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

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Background

This survey was commissioned by AARP Georgia to explore members' views and concerns about utility issues. Utility issues such as electric and natural gas service as well as telecommunications services are of high importance to AARP Georgia members. As prices for these services continue to increase, many members worry about their ability to pay for such necessities as electricity, natural gas, and basic phone service.

As the Georgia legislature continues to examine these issues in the 2006 session, they need to ensure that consumers can obtain service at reasonable rates and that competition actually will provide the promised benefits. The State of Georgia must continue to oversee consumer protections and service quality for these essential services.

The present report is based on data from a mail survey of 2,143 Georgia AARP members. It was conducted by AARP from July through August, 2005. The survey has a sampling error of +/- 2.12%;[1] the sample was weighted by age and gender to represent the actual composition of Georgia members. The full methodology is provided at the end of the report and the full annotated questionnaire is contained in the appendix of this report. Percents may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

[1] Meaning that at the 95% confidence level, member responses reported here are within 2.12 percentage points of what they would have been if every Georgia AARP member was interviewed.

Highlights

Electric Service

- Six in ten (61%) Georgia members say their electric utility bills have increased in the last three years. Forty-five percent say they pay about the right amount for their electricity, while about the same percentage (44%) say they pay too much.
- Over three-fourths (77%) of members say they are at least somewhat concerned about their ability to afford future electric rate increases.
- Almost three-fourths (73%) say they are extremely or very satisfied with their electric service.

Natural Gas Service

- Of those who have natural gas service at home, almost eight in ten (79%) say that their natural gas bills have increased over the past three years.
- About a quarter (24%) say they are paying the right amount for their natural gas, while 67 percent say they are paying too much.
- More than eight in ten (81%) are at least somewhat concerned about being able to afford future natural gas increases.
- Seven in ten (70%) of those with natural gas service at home currently use a service marketer in the AGLC system. Over four in ten (44%) say they chose to purchase gas from a marketer due to lower prices.
- More than eight in ten (85%) say they are at least somewhat satisfied with their natural gas marketer.

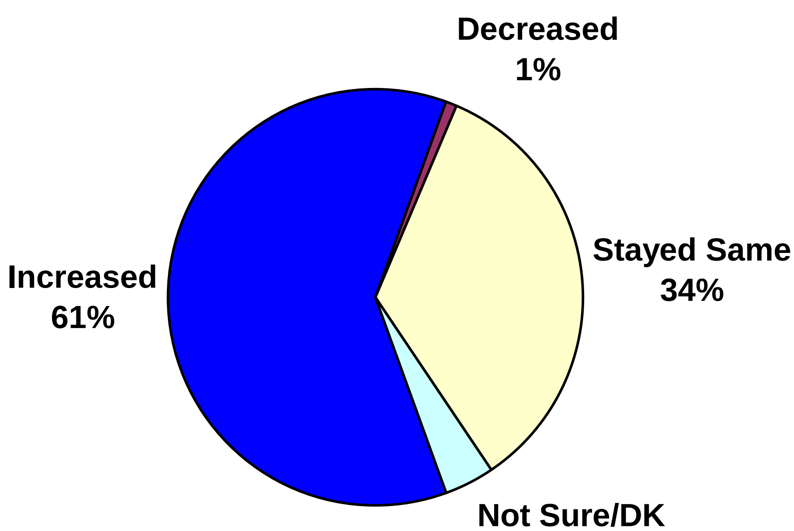
Findings

Electric Service

Six in ten Georgia members say their electric bills have increased over the past three years.

When asked if their electric bills had increased, decreased, or stayed the same over the past three years, six in ten (61%) Georgia members say their electric bills have increased. A third (34%) say their bills have stayed the same, while one percent say they have decreased. Younger members, those 50 to 74, are more likely than older members to say their electric bills have increased (64% 50-59; 62% 60-74; 54% 75+).

Movement of Electric Utility Bills in Past Three Years
(N =2,143)



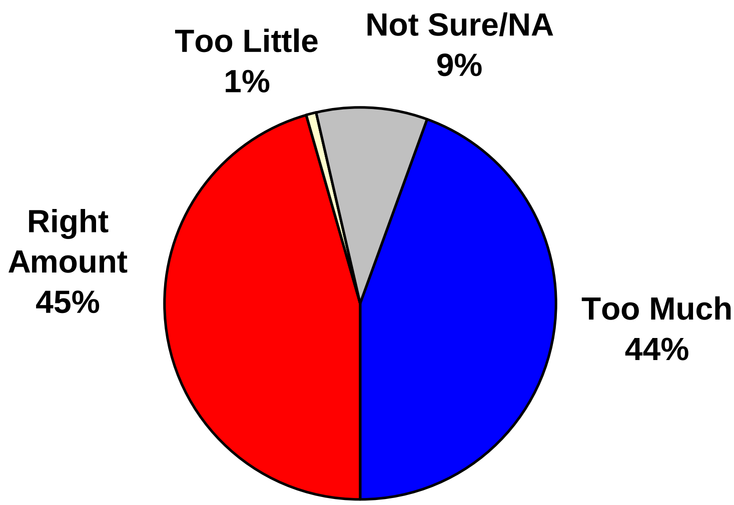
Most members find their electric bills at least somewhat easy to understand.

Six in ten (60%) say that their electric bills are extremely (15%) or very (45%) easy to understand. An additional 28 percent say that their bills are somewhat easy to understand, while nine percent find them not very (7%) or not at all (2%) easy to understand.

More than four in ten members say they are paying too much for their electricity.

Over four in ten (44%) Georgia members say they pay too much for their electricity, while a similar number (45%) say they pay about the right amount. Members under age 75 are more likely than older members to say they are paying too much (48% 50-59; 45% 60-74; 36% 75+).

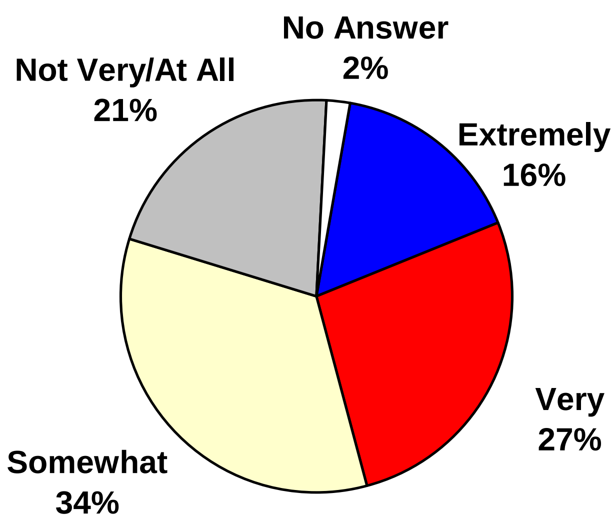
Member Opinion on How Much They Pay for Electric Service (N =2,143)



Over three-fourths of Georgia AARP members are concerned about their ability to afford future rate increases.

More than three-fourths (77%) of members say they are at least somewhat concerned with their ability to afford future electric rate increases. Members age 60 to 74 are more likely than others to say they are extremely or very concerned about paying for rate increases (41% 50-59; 47% 60-74; 40% 75+).

Concern About Ability to Pay Future Rate Increases for Electric Service (N =2,143)



Nearly three-fourths of Georgia members say they are satisfied with their electric service.

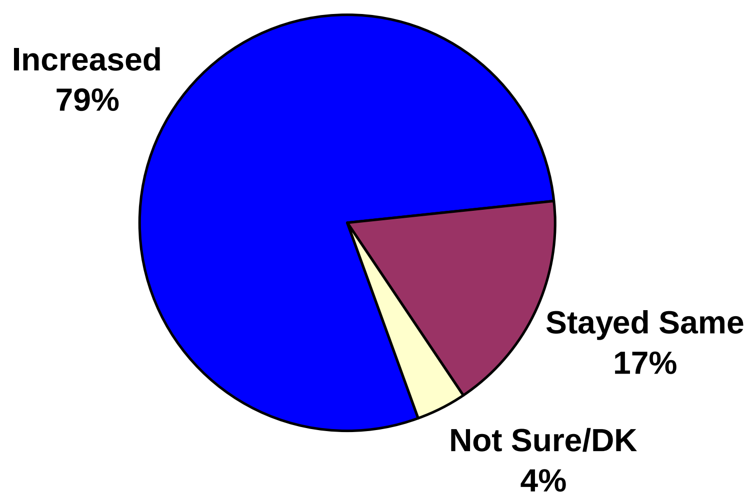
Almost three-fourths (73%) of Georgia members say they are satisfied with their electric service. Sixteen percent are extremely satisfied, while 57 percent say they are very satisfied. A further 22 percent are somewhat satisfied. Only four percent say they are not very (3%) or not at all (1%) satisfied.

Natural Gas

Almost eight in ten members with natural gas service say their bills have increased over the last three years.

Almost six in ten (58%) respondents say they have natural gas service at home. Of those who have such service, eight in ten (79%) say their natural gas utility bills have increased over the past three years. Members age 50 to 74 are more likely than older members to say that their bills have increased (81% 50-59; 80% 60-74; 70% 75+).

Movement of Natural Gas Utility Bills in Past Three Years (n =1,240)



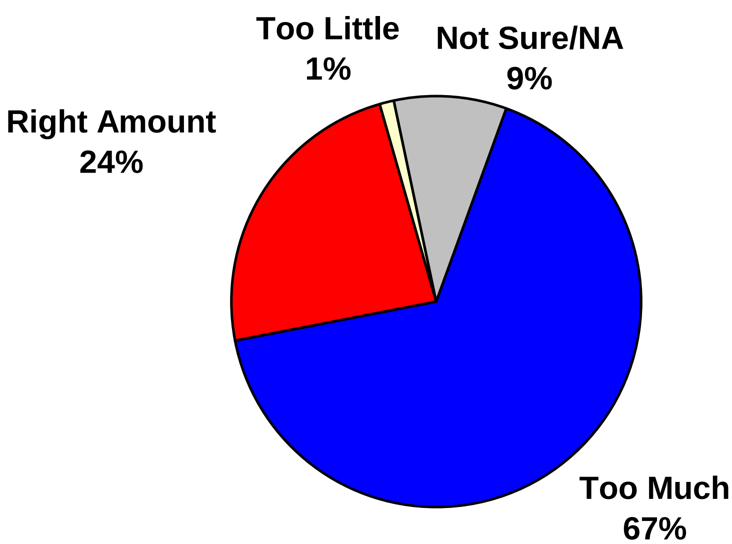
Most members with natural gas service can understand their bill.

Eight in ten (80%) members who have natural gas service find it at least somewhat easy to understand their natural gas bill. Eight percent find their gas bill extremely easy to understand, while over a third find it either very easy (38%) or somewhat easy (34%). Thirteen percent say their bill is not very easy to understand, while four percent say it is not at all easy to understand.

Almost seven in ten members with natural gas service say they are paying too much for their service.

Almost seven in ten (67%) Georgia AARP members who have natural gas service at home say they are paying too much for their natural gas service. About a quarter say they are paying the right amount for this service. Younger members ages 50 to 74 are more likely than older members to say they are paying too much (72% 50-59; 67% 60-74; 59% 75+).

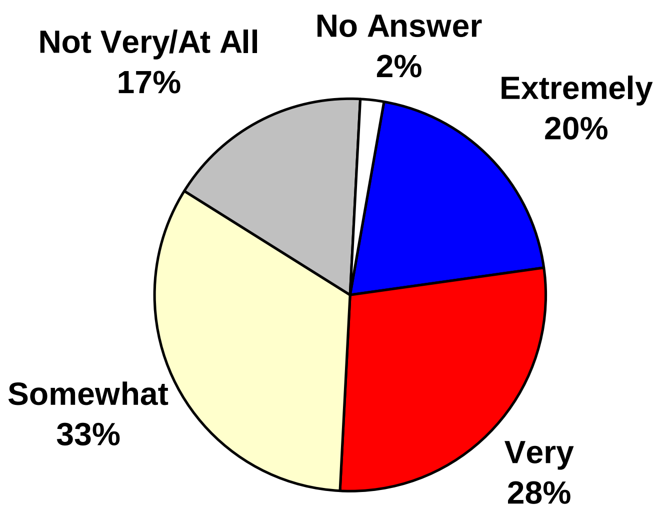
Member Opinion on How Much They Pay for Natural Gas Service (n =1,240)



Eight in ten respondents with natural gas are concerned about their ability to afford to pay future natural gas rate increases.

Eight in ten (81%) members who have natural gas service at home are concerned about their ability to pay for future natural gas rate increases. Two in ten members say they are extremely concerned about their ability to pay, with a further 28 percent saying they are very concerned. Younger members ages 50 to 74 are more likely than older members to be extremely worried about their ability to pay rate increases (24% 50-59; 21% 60-74; 11% 75+).

Concern About Ability to Pay Future Rate Increases for Natural Gas Service (n =1,240)



Nine in ten members with natural gas service are satisfied with their service.

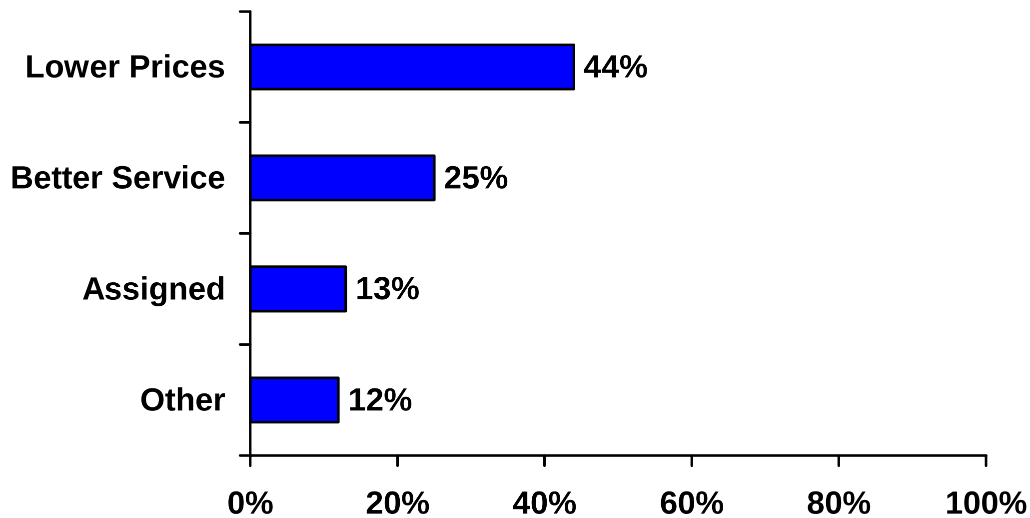
Among those who have natural gas service at home, nine in ten (91%) say they are at least somewhat satisfied with this service. Nine percent say they are extremely satisfied, while almost half (49%) are very satisfied. A third (33%) are somewhat satisfied with their service. Eight percent say they are not very (6%) or not at all (2%) satisfied with their natural gas service. Members ages 60 and older are more likely than younger members to say there are extremely or very satisfied with their natural gas service (52% 50-59; 59% 60-74; 64% 75+).

Four in ten of those who use a natural gas marketer chose a marketer because of the lower prices offered.

Seven in ten (70%) of those with natural gas service at home chose to purchase such gas through a natural gas service marketer in the Atlanta Gas Light Company (AGLC) system. Currently, there are ten approved natural gas service marketers in the AGLC system.

Over four in ten (44%) of those who use a natural gas service marketer say they chose to do so because of lower prices. A quarter say they did so because of better service, while 13 percent say they were assigned a marketer. Younger members ages 50 to 74 are more likely than older members to say they chose a marketer based on lower prices (52% 50-59; 44% 60-74; 33% 75+).

Reasons for Choosing a Natural Gas Service Marketer
(n =872)



Over eight in ten members who have natural gas and use a marketer are at least somewhat satisfied with their natural gas marketer.

Among those who use a natural gas marketer, over eight in ten (85%) are at least somewhat satisfied with their marketer. Five percent say they are extremely satisfied, while 37 percent say they are very satisfied. Four in ten (43%) are somewhat satisfied. Twelve percent say they are not very satisfied (9%) or not at all satisfied (3%) with their natural gas marketer. Members age 75 and older are more likely than younger members to be extremely or very satisfied (36% 50-59; 41% 60-74; 53% 75+).

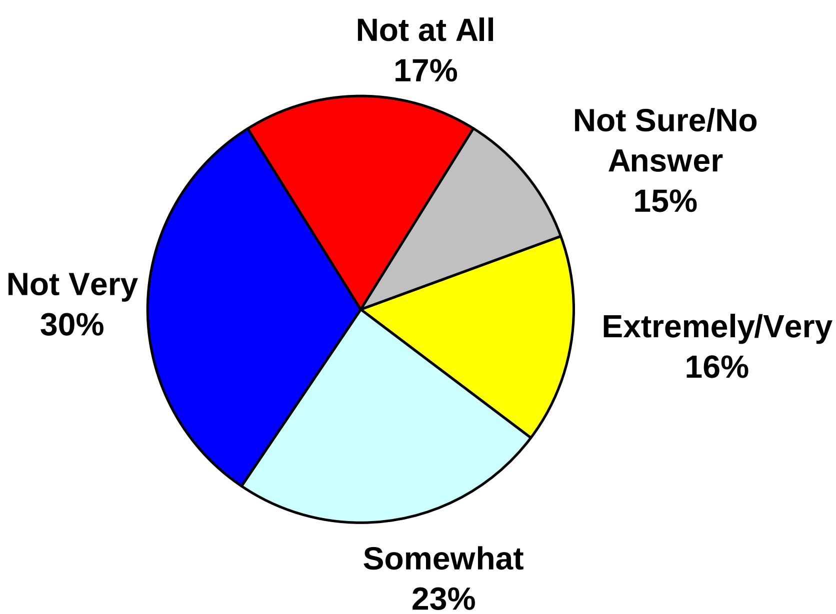
A quarter of members who use natural gas and use a marketer found choosing a natural gas marketer to be somewhat difficult.

A quarter (26%) of members with natural gas service who use a marketer say choosing a natural gas marketer was not very easy (18%) or not at all easy (8%). Six in ten members say choosing a marketer was at least somewhat easy. Eight percent say choosing a marketer was extremely easy, while over a quarter (26%) say it was very easy. Almost three in ten (29%) say choosing a natural gas marketer was somewhat easy. Older members age 75 and older were more likely than younger members to say choosing a marketer was extremely or very easy (31% 50-59; 32% 60-74; 41% 75+).

Almost half of members with natural gas service and a marketer found it not very easy to compare the rates of different natural gas marketers.

Among those who use a natural gas marketer for their natural gas service, nearly half (47%) say it was not very easy (30%) or not at all easy (17%) to compare the rates of the different natural gas marketers. Members age 50 to 59 were more likely than other members to say it was not very easy or not at all easy to compare rates (55% 50-59; 42% 60-74; 41% 75+).

Ease of Comparing the Rates of Natural Gas Marketers
(n =872)



Utility Assistance Programs

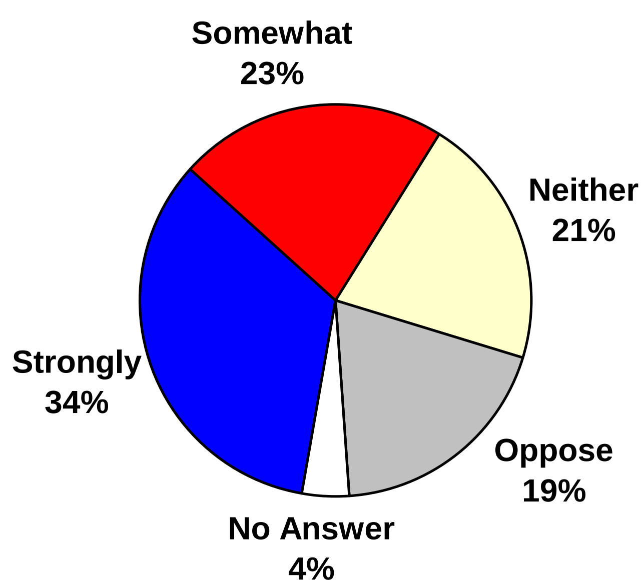
More than four in ten members are unaware of Georgia's utility assistance programs.

Over four in ten (44%) respondents say they are unaware of any assistance programs in Georgia that help eligible consumers pay for their utility bills. Of the 47 percent (n= 1,125) who are aware of such programs, only six percent have ever applied to such a program to pay for their utility bills. Younger members age 50 to 59 are more likely than older members to be aware of such programs (56% 50-59; 45% 60-74; 42% 75+). However, members age 75 and older are more likely than younger members to have applied for such programs (4% 50-59; 4% 60-74; 11% 75+).

Over half of members support a law that would automatically enroll qualified consumers into utility assistance programs.

More than half (56%) of Georgia AARP members say they would strongly (34%) or somewhat (22%) support a law that automatically enrolls consumers who qualify into utility assistance programs, even if they themselves were ineligible. Members age 50 to 74 are more likely than older members to support such a law (62% 50-59; 60% 60-74; 46% 75+).

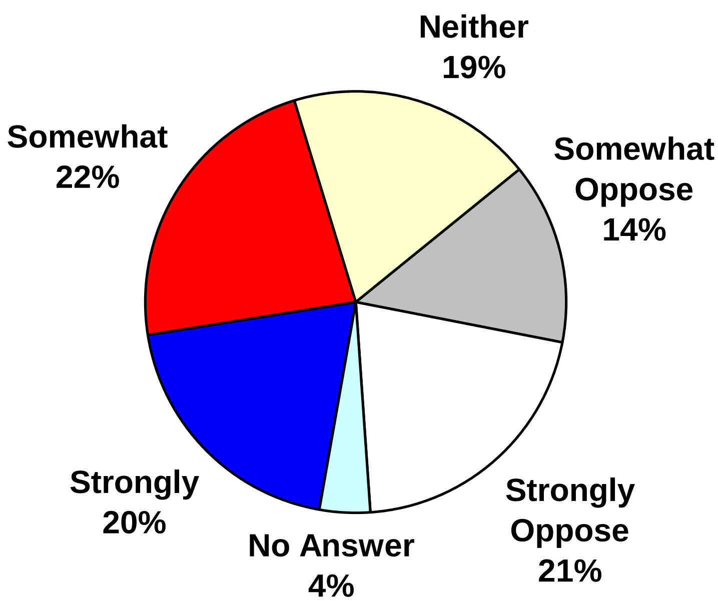
Support for Automatic Enrollment in Utility Assistance Programs
(N =2,143)



Over four in ten members would support such a law even if it means an increase on their utility bills.

More than four in ten (43%) members say they would continue to support a law that would automatically enroll qualified consumers in a utility assistance program even if their own utility bill would increase 25 or 50 cents a month. Members 50 to 74 are more likely to say they would strongly or somewhat support such a law (48% 50-59; 47% 60-74; 33% 75+).

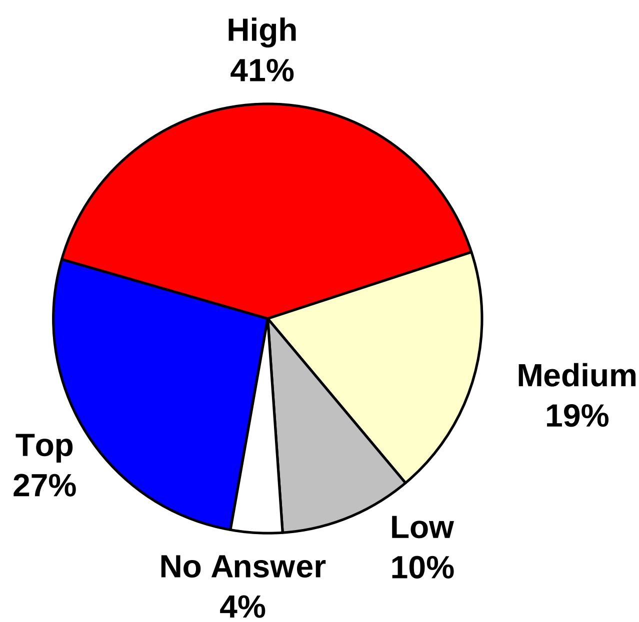
Support for Automatic Enrollment in Utility Assistance Programs Even if it Means an Increase in Your Utility Bills
(N =2,143)



Georgia members believe maintaining safe, affordable, and high quality utility services should be a high priority for AARP Georgia.

Almost seven in ten (68%) members say that safe, affordable, high quality utility and communication services should be a top or high priority for AARP Georgia. Younger members are more likely than those age 75 or older to say this should be a top or high priority (70% 50-59; 73% 60-74; 61% 75+).

Priority for Safe, Affordable, High Quality Utility Services
(N =2,143)



Profile of Georgia Respondents

Two thousand one hundred and forty-three Georgia residents participated in the survey. More than eight in ten (83%) are regular voters. Sixty-two percent of those surveyed report they always vote while another 21 percent say they vote most of the time.

Three in ten (29%) respondents are age 50 to 59, 44 percent are 60 to 74, and 22 percent are 75 years old or older. Most respondents are women (51%). Six in ten (59%) Georgia respondents are married, while two in ten (20%) are widowed and thirteen percent are divorced. A third (34%) of respondents have a college education or higher, while 26 percent hold high school diplomas or the equivalent. Over half (52%) of members are retired, and another 24 percent remain employed full-time. Four in ten (40%) respondents have an annual household income below $35,000, three in ten (29%) have a household income of $35,000 but less than $75,000, and two in ten (20%) have a household income of $75,000 or more. Eight in ten (83%) members are White or Caucasian and 13 percent are Black or African American. Two percent are Hispanic, Spanish, or Latino.

Conclusion

Survey results indicate that utility issues resonate with Georgia members. Members' electric and natural gas bills have increased over the past three years, and many worry that they will be unable to pay for any additional rate increases. Younger members, those 50 to 74, are more likely than older members to say that their electric and natural gas bills have increased. Although satisfied with their service and able to understand their billing statements, members say they pay too much for their electric (44%) and natural gas (67%) services. Members 50 to 74 are more likely than older members to say they pay too much for their gas and electric services.

Of those with natural gas service at home, seven in ten use a natural gas marketer. Many chose to use a marketer because of lower prices. Almost half said that it was difficult to compare the rates of different marketers when they were trying to choose a provider.

Almost seven in ten members say that working for safe, affordable, and high quality utility services should be a priority for AARP Georgia. More than half support a law that would automatically enroll qualified consumers into utility assistance programs, even if they were ineligible for such programs. Over four in ten would support such a law even if it meant they would face an increase in their own utility bills.

Methodology

This mail survey explores the opinions and experiences of Georgia AARP members on utilities including telephone, cellular phone, Internet, gas, and electric. AARP conducted the 2005 Georgia Member Survey between July and August 2005. Researchers at AARP randomly selected 4,000 AARP members in Georgia making sure to select members proportionate to each of three age groups: 50-59, 60-74, and 75+. Each selected member received a pre-notification postcard, the survey itself, a reminder postcard, and a second survey.

From the sample, 2,143 members returned the survey, making the response rate 54 percent. The sampling error for this survey sample is ± 2.2 percent. This means that in 95 out of 100 samples of this size, the results obtained in the sample would fall in a range of about two percentage points of what would have been obtained if every eligible AARP member household in Georgia, approximately 560,000 households, had been surveyed. There are approximately 925,000 AARP members in Georgia. Researchers weighted the sample by age group to represent the AARP Georgia member population.

ANNOTATED QUESTIONNAIRE

2005 AARP
Georgia Member Survey

(AARP Members Weighted N =2,143; Response Rate =54%; Sampling Error =2.12 ± %)

(Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding or multiple response.)

Electric Service

1. In the past three years, have your electric utility bills increased, stayed about the same, or decreased?

	%
Increased	61
Stayed about the same	34
Decreased	1
Not sure	3
No Answer	1

2. Thinking about your last electricity bill, how easy was it for you to understand your bill?

	%
Extremely easy	15
Very easy	45
Somewhat easy	28
Not very easy	7
Not at all easy	2
Not sure	1
No Answer	2

3. Thinking about the past year, are you paying too little, about the right amount, or too much for your electricity?

	%
Paying too little	1
Paying about the right amount	45
Paying too much	44
Not sure	9
No Answer	2

4. **How concerned are you about being able to afford to pay future electric rate increases?**

	%
Extremely concerned	16
Very concerned	27
Somewhat concerned	34
Not very concerned	16
Not at all concerned	5
No Answer	2

5. **How satisfied are you with your electric service?**

	%
Extremely satisfied	16
Very satisfied	57
Somewhat satisfied	22
Not very satisfied	3
Not at all satisfied	1
No Answer	2

Natural Gas Service

6. **Do you currently have natural gas service at home?**

	%
Yes	58
No ▶ **GO TO QUESTION 17**	38
No Answer	5

7. **In the past three years, have your natural gas utility bills increased, stayed about the same, or decreased? (n=1240)**

	%
Increased	79
Stayed about the same	17
Decreased	*
Not sure	3
No Answer	1

8. **Thinking about your last natural gas bill, how easy was it for you to understand your bill? (n=1240)**

	%
Extremely easy	8
Very easy	38
Somewhat easy	34
Not very easy	13
Not at all easy	4
Not sure	1
No Answer	2

9. **Thinking about the past year, are you paying too little, about the right amount, or too much for your natural gas? (n=1240)**

	%
Paying too little	1
Paying about the right amount	24
Paying too much	67
Not sure	7
No Answer	2

10. **How concerned are you about being able to afford to pay future natural gas rate increases? (n=1240)**

	%
Extremely concerned	20
Very concerned	28
Somewhat concerned	33
Not very concerned	13
Not at all concerned	4
No Answer	2

11. **How satisfied are you with your natural gas service? (n=1240)**

	%
Extremely satisfied	9
Very satisfied	49
Somewhat satisfied	33
Not very satisfied	6
Not at all satisfied	2
No Answer	2

12. Atlanta Gas Light Company (AGLC) became a pipes-only gas company in 1998, when it elected to open its territory to competition to conform to the Natural Gas Competition and Deregulation Act of 1997. Ten certified natural gas marketers now serve customers on AGLC's system. Currently, approved natural gas service marketers include ACN Energy, Coweta-Fayette EMC Natural Gas, GasKey, Georgia Natural Gas, Infinite Energy, SCANA Energy, Shell Energy Services, Southern Company Gas, Vectren Source, and Walton EMC Natural Gas. Do you currently use a natural gas service marketer in the AGLC system? (n=1240)

	%
Yes	70
No ▶ **GO TO QUESTION 17**	16
Not sure ▶ **GO TO QUESTION 17**	8
No Answer	6

13. Did you choose to purchase natural gas service from a marketer because of the following reasons? (n=872)

	Yes %	No %	Not sure %	No Answer %
a. Lower prices	44	9	9	38
b. Better service	25	13	9	52
c. I did not choose. I was assigned to one.	13	19	4	64
d. Other (Specify)	12	2	2	85

14. How easy was it to choose a natural gas service marketer? (n=872)

	%
Extremely easy	8
Very easy	26
Somewhat easy	29
Not very easy	18
Not at all easy	8
Not sure	5
No Answer	5

15. How easy was it to compare the rates of the different natural gas service marketers? (n=872)

	%
Extremely easy	3
Very easy	12
Somewhat easy	23
Not very easy	30
Not at all easy	17
Not sure	10
No Answer	5

16. How satisfied are you with your natural gas marketer? (n=872)

	%
Extremely satisfied	5
Very satisfied	37
Somewhat satisfied	43
Not very satisfied	9
Not at all satisfied	3
No Answer	4

Traditional Telephone Service

17. Traditional telephone service refers to service received through a telephone line physically connected to your home that enables you to make and receive local and long-distance calls. Do you currently have traditional telephone service at home?

	%
Yes	94
No ▶ **GO TO QUESTION 24**	3
No Answer	3

18. People can buy basic telephone service as a separate service or they can choose to bundle their telephone services. Bundling refers to the practice of charging consumers a single price for two or more telephone services such as basic phone service, call waiting, caller ID, Internet, and long distance service. Do you currently pay a single price for two or more services, where basic phone service is included in the bundle of services? (n=2024)

	%
Yes	64
No	28
Not sure	6
No Answer	3

19. In the past three years, has your traditional telephone service bill increased, stayed about the same, or decreased? (n=2024)

	%
Increased	49
Stayed about the same	42
Decreased	3
Not sure	4
No Answer	2

20. Thinking about your last traditional telephone service bill, how easy was it for you to understand your bill? (n=2024)

	%
Extremely easy	7
Very easy	33
Somewhat easy	33
Not very easy	16
Not at all easy	9
Not sure	1
No Answer	2

21. Thinking about the past year, are you paying too little, about the right amount, or too much for your traditional telephone service? (n=2024)

	%
Paying too little	1
Paying about the right amount	34
Paying too much	57
Not sure	6
No Answer	2

22. How concerned are you about being able to afford future traditional telephone service rate increases? (n=2024)

	%
Extremely concerned	14
Very concerned	23
Somewhat concerned	36
Not very concerned	20
Not at all concerned	5
No Answer	2

23. How satisfied are you with your traditional telephone service? (n=2024)

	%
Extremely satisfied	5
Very satisfied	38
Somewhat satisfied	44
Not very satisfied	9
Not at all satisfied	2
No Answer	2

Cellular Telephone Service

24. Cellular service refers to service received through a connection from a cellular or wireless telephone to a relatively nearby radio transmitter receiver enabling you to make local and long-distance calls. A cellular or wireless telephone is not the same as a cordless telephone, which only works within a limited distance from the base unit that is plugged into a phone jack. Do you currently have cellular telephone service?

	%
Yes	74
No ▶ **GO TO QUESTION 37**	22
No Answer	4

25. Thinking about the terms of your cellular telephone service, do you….? (n=1588)

	%
Have a current annual contract for cellular telephone service	62
No longer have an annual contract, but I pay month-to-month for cellular telephone service	27
Use prepaid cellular telephone service	6
Not sure	3
No Answer	3

26. What is the primary reason you have cellular telephone service? (n=1588)

	%
Convenience to make calls from anywhere	64
Emergencies only	29
Other (Specify)________________________________	11
No Answer	3

27. About how long have you had your current cellular telephone service? (n=1588)

	%
Less than 1 year	11
1 year but less than 3 years	26
3 years or more	61
No Answer	3

28. Have you eliminated your traditional telephone service at home and only use cellular service for all your calling needs? (n=1588)

	%
Yes	2
No	95
Not sure	*
No Answer	2

29. How easy was it to choose a cellular service provider? (n=1588)

	%
I didn't choose it. It was chosen for me as a gift or for business.	13
Extremely easy	12
Very easy	30
Somewhat easy	29
Not very easy	11
Not at all easy	3
Not sure	1
No Answer	2

30. How easy was it to compare the rates of the different cellular service providers?

	%
I didn't compare rates.	26
Extremely easy	5
Very easy	17
Somewhat easy	22
Not very easy	19
Not at all easy	6
Not sure	2
No Answer	3

31. When you bought your current cellular telephone service, were you given an estimate of what your total monthly bill would be including all the taxes, fees, and charges? (n=1588)

	%
Does not apply—I did not buy the service ▶ **GO TO QUESTION 33**	9
Yes ▶ **GO TO QUESTION 33**	52
No	28
Not sure	7
No Answer	4

32. Would you like to have been given an estimate of what your total monthly bill would be including all the taxes, fees, and charges? (n=548)

	%
Yes	92
No	4
No Answer	4

33. In any given area, you may find "dead zones" where there is no coverage from your cellular service provider. How important is it that your cellular service provider let you know to the best extent possible of any dead zones in your service area? (n=1588)

	%
Extremely important	35
Very important	36
Somewhat important	18
Not very important	7
Not at all important	1
No Answer	3

34. When you received your first bill, did you think you were paying too little, about the right amount, or too much for your cellular service? (n=1588)

	%
I have not received a bill yet.	1
I do not receive a bill.	8
Paying too little	1
Paying about the right amount	52
Paying too much	33
Not sure	4
No Answer	3

35. Thinking about your last cellular bill, how easy was it for you to understand your bill? (n=1588)

	%
I have not received a bill yet.	1
I do not receive a bill.	9
Extremely easy	13
Very easy	32
Somewhat easy	26
Not very easy	10
Not at all easy	5
Not sure	1
No Answer	3

36. How satisfied are you with your cellular service? (n=1588)

	%
Extremely satisfied	6
Very satisfied	43
Somewhat satisfied	39
Not very satisfied	8
Not at all satisfied	2
No Answer	3

37. Currently, many new cellular service users must commit to a one-or two-year contract before receiving their first monthly bill. The penalty for canceling a cellular telephone service contract is typically $175 or more. How strongly would you support or oppose a law that gives cellular service users the right to terminate their service contract up to 20 days after receiving their first bill, even if the user is still responsible for the initial usage charges?

	%
Strongly support	58
Somewhat support	15
Neither support nor oppose	12
Somewhat oppose	2
Strongly oppose	4
No Answer	9

38. Would you support or oppose a state law that would require all cellular service providers to get their customers' consent before publishing customers' cell phone numbers in a public directory?

	%
Strongly support	74
Somewhat support	5
Neither support nor oppose	7
Somewhat oppose	2
Strongly oppose	5
No Answer	7

Internet Service

39. Do you currently have access to the Internet at home?

	%
Yes	62
No ▶ **GO TO QUESTION 44**	34
No Answer	4

40. What is the primary way you access the Internet at home? Do you use….? (n=1336)

	%
A dial-up modem through your telephone line. This connection requires that you dial in to a local or toll-free number through your computer. While you are connected to the Internet, you cannot make or receive telephone calls on that line.	47
A DSL or Digital Subscriber Line service through your telephone line. This is a high-speed connection that always stays on. It allows you to make and receive telephone calls while you are still connected to the Internet.	32
Cable modem service through your cable television line. This is a high-speed connection that always stays on. It is purchased through your cable television provider.	19
Other such as Satellite or Web TV	1
No Answer	2

41. In the past three years, have your Internet service bills increased, stayed about the same, or decreased? (n=1336)

	%
Increased	25
Stayed about the same	63
Decreased	6
Not sure	4
No Answer	2

42. Thinking about the past year, are you paying too little, about the right amount, or too much for your Internet service? (n=1336)

	%
Paying too little	1
Paying about the right amount	44
Paying too much	46
Not sure	7
No Answer	2

43. How satisfied are you with your Internet service? (n=1336)

	%
Extremely satisfied	6
Very satisfied	35
Somewhat satisfied	46
Not very satisfied	9
Not at all satisfied	3
No Answer	2

Utility Assistance Programs

44. Are you aware of any assistance programs in Georgia that help eligible consumers pay for their utility bills?

	%
Yes	47
No ▶ **GO TO QUESTION 46**	44
Not sure	6
No Answer	4

45. Have you ever applied for assistance programs in Georgia to pay for your utility bills? (n=1125)

	%
Yes	6
No	92
No Answer	2

46. Participation in these assistance programs is very low, roughly 10%-15% of eligible consumers. Would you support or oppose a law that automatically enrolls consumers who qualify into utility assistance programs, even if you were not personally eligible?

	%
Strongly support	34
Somewhat support	22
Neither support nor oppose	21
Somewhat oppose	8
Strongly oppose	11
No Answer	4

47. Would you support or oppose this automatic enrollment into utility assistance programs for consumers who qualify even if it cost you a little more on your utility bill such as 25 cents or 50 cents per month?

	%
Strongly support	20
Somewhat support	23
Neither support nor oppose	19
Somewhat oppose	14
Strongly oppose	21
No Answer	4

Legislative Priority

48. How much of a legislative priority should it be for AARP to work on maintaining safe, affordable, and high quality utility and advanced communication services in Georgia?

	%
Top priority	27
High priority	41
Medium priority	19
Low priority	5
Not a priority	5
No Answer	4

About You

The following questions are for classification purposes only and will be kept entirely confidential.

D1. Are you male or female?

	%
Male	47
Female	51
No Answer	2

D2. What is your age as of your last birthday? ________ (in years)

	%
50-59	29
60-74	44
75+	22
No Answer	5

D3. What is your current marital status?

	%
Married	59
Not married, living with partner	1
Separated	1
Divorced	13
Widowed	20
Never married	3
No Answer	2

D4. Thinking about your state elections for Georgia Governor and Legislators in the last ten years, how often would you say you vote?

	%
Always	62
Most of the time	21
About half of the time	4
Seldom	4
Never	6
No Answer	3

D5. What is the highest level of education that you completed?

	%
0-12th grade (no diploma)	9
High school graduate (or equivalent)	26
Post-high school education (no degree)	16
2-year college degree	9
4-year college degree	14
Post-graduate study (no degree)	5
Graduate or professional degree (s)	15
No Answer	7

D6. Which of the following best describes your current employment status?

	%
Self-employed full-time	6
Self-employed part-time	3
Employed full-time	24
Employed part-time	6
Unemployed, looking for work	2
Retired, not working at all	52
Not in the workforce for some other reason	5
No Answer	2

D7. Are you of Hispanic, Spanish, or Latino origin or descent?

	%
Yes	2
No	92
Not sure	1
No Answer	6

D8. What is your race?

	%
White-Caucasian	83
Black or African-American	13
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	*
Asian	*
American Indian or Alaska Native	*
Other	1
No Answer	3

D9. What is your 5-digit zip code? (WRITE IN YOUR ZIP CODE.) __ __ __ __ __

D10. What was your annual household income before taxes in 2004?

	%
Less than $15,000	13
$15,000 to less than $25,000	14
$25,000 to less than $35,000	13
$35,000 to less than $50,000	14
$50,000 to less than $75,000	15
$75,000 to less than $100,000	9
$100,000 or more	11
No Answer	11

Thank you for completing this survey.
Please use the postage-paid envelope and return it to State Member Research, AARP, 601 E Street, NW, Washington, DC 20049, by August 19, 2005.

AARP
Knowledge Management
For more information contact Erica Dinger at (202) 434-6176.