

February 15, 2013

The Honorable Robert Casey, Jr.
393 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Ander Crenshaw
440 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Richard Burr
217 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
1707 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
203 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Pete Sessions
2233 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-4332

Dear Senator Casey, Senator Burr, Congressman Crenshaw, Congressman Van Hollen, & Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we write to applaud you for introducing the *Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act of 2013* (S. 313/H.R.647), which will give individuals with disabilities and their families the ability to save for the future just like every other American. We commend you for your bold leadership in championing this important legislation, and look forward to working with you to support its enactment.

The ABLE Act establishes a new subsection within Section 529 of the Internal Revenue Code to allow individuals with disabilities to establish ABLE accounts to fund a variety of essential expenses for individuals, including medical and dental care, education, community-based supports, employment training, assistive technology, housing, and transportation. The ABLE Act will enable secure funding for disability-related expenses on behalf of the designated beneficiaries with disabilities that will supplement, but not supplant, benefits provided through private insurance, the Medicaid program, the Supplemental Security Income program (SSI), the beneficiary's employment, and other sources.

Moreover, the ABLE Act provides individuals with disabilities with a flexible savings tool similar to what other Americans have through college savings accounts, health savings accounts, and individual retirement accounts. We are also pleased that the legislation also contains Medicaid fraud protection against abuse and a Medicaid pay-back provision when the beneficiary passes away.

Currently, barriers to employment, independent living, and ultimately, economic self-sufficiency, exist because individuals with disabilities often must rely on services through Medicaid and income supports through SSI, and to qualify for these programs, they face significant limitations on the amount of assets they can maintain. We feel the time is now to enact this important legislation, and allow people with disabilities a chance to escape from poverty and live the American Dream.

Again, we are grateful for your leadership on this issue and look forward to working with you to support this critical legislation in the 113th Congress.

Sincerely,

American Association of People with Disabilities
ANCOR
Association of Jewish Family & Children's Agencies
Association of People Supporting EmploymentFirst (APSE)
Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Autism Speaks
Autistic Self Advocacy Network
Collaboration to Promote Self-Determination
Community Living Services, Inc.
Delaware State Council for Persons with Disabilities
Disability Opportunity Fund
Easter Seals
Little People of America
Lutheran Services in America
Muscular Dystrophy Association
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Council on Independent Living
National Disability Institute
National Down Syndrome Congress
National Down Syndrome Society
National Federation of the Blind
National Fragile X Foundation
National Respite Coalition
Service Employees International Union
Special Olympics
TASH
The Arc
The Daniel Jordan Fiddle Foundation
The Jewish Federations of North America
UJA-Federation of New York
United Cerebral Palsy