



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

March 11, 2019

Senator Bob Casey
393 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Jerry Moran
521 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Chris Van Hollen
110 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Pat Roberts
109 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Casey, Senator Moran, Senator Van Hollen, and Senator Roberts:

The undersigned members of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) are writing to express our strong support for the ABLÉ Age Adjustment Act. We sincerely thank you for your continued commitment to the financial security of all Americans with disabilities, no matter the age of onset. We look forward to working with you to pass this lifechanging legislation in the 116th Congress.

CCD is the largest coalition of national organizations working together to advocate for federal public policy that ensures the self-determination, independence, empowerment, integration and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society.

The Stephen Beck, Jr. Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act (PL 113-295), signed into law in December of 2014, allows certain individuals with disabilities the opportunity to save resources in a tax-advantaged savings account (an ABLÉ account) for the purposes of covering disability-related expenses. The resources saved in an ABLÉ account are not taken into consideration when determining the individual's eligibility for federally funded means tested benefits, including Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicaid. The opportunity provided through the ABLÉ Act to assist in securing more financial stability for individuals with disabilities and their families is profound; however, it is limited to those individuals whose disability had an onset prior to their 26th birthday. Many individuals who could benefit from ABLÉ accounts are left out since many conditions can and do occur later in life, including multiple sclerosis, Lou Gehrig's disease, or paralysis due to an accident. Additionally, veterans who become disabled as a result of their service after age 25 are currently ineligible for ABLÉ accounts.

The ABLÉ Age Adjustment Act would amend Section 529A(e) of the Internal Revenue Code to increase the eligibility threshold for ABLÉ accounts for onset of disability from prior to age 26 to prior to age 46. ABLÉ accounts are tax-favored accounts that are designed to enable individuals with disabilities to save for and pay for disability-related expenses. There are now more than 40 states with ABLÉ programs that empower individuals with disabilities, either in their own states or nationwide, to achieve and maintain health, independence, and quality of life, yet millions of individuals with disabilities that occurred in their late twenties, thirties, forties, and later in life are currently unable to take advantage of this important savings tool.

Furthermore, the long-term sustainability, availability, and affordability of ABLÉ programs to individuals with disabilities are less stable without this expansion of eligibility. Recent data from the National Association of State Treasurers (NAST) shows that passage of the ABLÉ Age Adjustment Act is critical for the sustainability of ABLÉ programs. According to the 2017 NAST Sustainability Report, the “age increase legislation.... will be paramount to achieving ABLÉ sustainability....”.

Enactment of this critical legislation will empower more than eight million additional individuals with disabilities to start saving their own money to better secure their financial future while bolstering the sustainability of all ABLÉ programs nationwide. We look forward to working with all of you to pass the bipartisan ABLÉ Age Adjustment Act in the 116th Congress.

For more information or to discuss further, please contact any of the CCD Financial Security Task Force Co-Chairs – David Goldfarb from the National Association of Elder Law Attorneys (dgoldfarb@naela.org), Sarah Meek from the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR) (smeek@ancor.org), Mark Richert from the National Disability Institute (mrichert@ndi-inc.org), and Heather Sachs from the National Down Syndrome Congress (heather@ndscenter.org).

Sincerely,

ACCSES

American Academy of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation
American Association of People with Disabilities
American Association on Health and Disability
American Council for the Blind
American Dance Therapy Association
American Music Therapy Association
American Network of Community Options & Resources (ANCOR)
American Physical Therapy Association
American Therapeutic Recreation Association
Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs (ATAP)
Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE)
Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)
Autism Society of America
Autistic Self Advocacy Network
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Brain Injury Association of America
Center for Public Representation
Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation
Council for Learning Disabilities
Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR)
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund
Easterseals
Epilepsy Foundation
Jewish Federations of North America
Justice in Aging
Learning Disabilities Association of America
Lutheran Services in America Disability Network

National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Association of Elder Law Attorneys
National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disability Services
National Association of State Head Injury Administrators
National Disability Institute
National Disability Rights Network
National Down Syndrome Congress
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
Paralyzed Veterans of America
SourceAmerica
TASH
The Advocacy Institute
The Arc of the United States
United Spinal Association