



July 22, 2013

The Honorable Kay Hagan
521 Dirksen Senate Office
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Hagan:

The undersigned members of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) wish to commend you for being an original cosponsor of the "Disabled Military Child Protection Act" (S. 1076) and working with Senator Gillibrand to include the bill in the National Defense Authorization Act markup package. CCD is a coalition of national disability rights, advocacy, consumer, and provider organizations.

As you know, the Disabled Military Child Protection Act will erase an inequity under current law between military families and non-military families and allow military families to address the long-term care needs of their minor or adult children with disabilities. Unlike many citizens, military retirees are not permitted to transfer their survivor benefits into a special needs trust for the benefit of their disabled child. Currently, military retirees must leave their Survivor Benefit Plan benefits directly to the disabled child. This places the disabled child in jeopardy of losing important government benefits for long-term care, such as Medicaid and Supplemental Security Income.

This bill will allow military retirees, upon their death, to leave their Survivor Benefit Plan benefits to a special needs trust for their disabled child. This is critically important to preventing these children with disabilities from losing access to government benefits that are central to their survival and independence in their homes and communities. Your legislation will allow military families to plan for the expensive and complicated long-term care needs of their children with disabilities.

We truly appreciate your understanding of this issue and your dedication to improving the lives of military families. As you know, your efforts led to this bill's language being included in the Senate Armed Services Committee final markup package of the National Defense Authorization Act (S. 1197). Your work is greatly appreciated and we look forward to providing support for this bill throughout the legislative process.

We applaud your efforts to assist military families and children with disabilities. If the CCD Veterans and Military Families Task Force can assist you in advancing this legislation, please do not hesitate to call upon us. If you have any questions, please

contact Brian Lindberg of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys at brian@consumers.org or (202) 789-3606 or Jason Miko, Special Needs Alliance at jmiko@russellpublic.com or 520-232-9840.

Sincerely,

American Association on Health and Disability
American Music Therapy Association
American Network of Community Options and Resources.
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Autism National Committee
Daniel Jordan Fiddle Foundation
Easter Seals
Health and Disability Advocates
Lutheran Services in America Disability Network
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare
National Down Syndrome Congress
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
National Organization on Disability
Paralyzed Veterans of America
TASH
The Advocacy Institute
The Arc of the United States
The National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys
The Special Needs Alliance
VetsFirst, a program of United Spinal Association