



November 12, 2024

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Chair
Senate Finance Committee
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Crapo
Ranking Member
Senate Finance Committee
239 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: *Support for S. 5070, the Ensuring Access to Medicaid Buy-In Programs Act*

Dear Chair Wyden and Ranking Member Crapo:

The undersigned members of the Consortium for Constituents with Disabilities (CCD) Long Term Services and Supports (LTSS) Task Force write in support of S. 5070, the bipartisan legislation that will ensure workers with disabilities can maintain their employment without jeopardizing access to critical Medicaid services. 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, free from racism, ableism, sexism, and xenophobia, as well as LGBTQ+ based discrimination and religious intolerance.

People with disabilities utilize Medicaid to access a broad range of services, from primary medical care to long-term services and supports that enable them to live full and independent lives in their homes and communities. Without access to these life-sustaining services, people with disabilities relying on these crucial services are at increased risk of hospitalization or institutionalization. Unfortunately, many people who would most benefit from community-based services face unnecessary restrictions that prevent them from becoming or remaining Medicaid-eligible.

In 1999, Congress sought to address one of these barriers through passage of the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act, which allowed states to cover working people with disabilities in Medicaid, even when their wages would otherwise make them ineligible. The Medicaid Buy-In program, which is utilized by a majority of states, allows people with disabilities to work and earn above the state's income or asset limitations and receive Medicaid coverage by buying into the program through monthly premiums. However, the federal statute's requirement that individuals must be between the ages of 16 to 64 to be eligible for a

state Medicaid Buy-In program unduly forces workers who are 65 and older out of the workforce.

S. 5070 would make improvements to the Medicaid Buy-In program by removing the age limit and ensuring people with disabilities can work beyond age 64 and remain eligible for Medicaid. This legislation is necessary to ensure those who want to continue working may do so without sacrificing their ability to receive critical health care and home and community-based support. It would further allow individuals to maintain their independence and autonomy, while enabling states to preserve flexibility in providing Medicaid coverage.

Congress has the opportunity to remove the age restriction on the Medicaid Buy-In program and ensure workers with disabilities have a pathway to achieving financial independence, no matter their age. We urge this committee to support S. 5070.

Sincerely,

Access Ready Inc.
Allies for Independence
American Association of People with Disabilities
American Association on Health and Disability
American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR)
Amputee Coalition
Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE)
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Autism Society of America
Autism Speaks
Autistic Self Advocacy Network
Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Caring Across Generations
Center for Medicare Advocacy
Communication 4 ALL
Cure SMA
Disability Belongs
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF)
Epilepsy Foundation of America
Justice in Aging
Lakeshore Foundation
Muscular Dystrophy Association
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Center for Parent Leadership, Advocacy, and Community Empowerment (National PLACE)
National Disability Institute
National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)

National Down Syndrome Congress
National Health Law Program
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
National PLAN Alliance (NPA)
National Respite Coalition
TASH
United Spinal Association
World Institute on Disability