

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

CRENSHAW, CASEY RE-INTRODUCE

ACHIEVING A BETTER LIFE EXPERIENCE ACT

Proposal Attracts Over 70 Bi-partisan, Bi-Cameral Original Co-Sponsors

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Ander Crenshaw (R-FL) and Senator Robert Casey (D-PA) today (2/13) re-introduced the *Achieving a Better Life Experience Act (ABLE Act)* – bipartisan legislation to create an improved quality of life for individuals with disabilities through tax-free savings accounts.

The *ABLE Act* would amend Section 529 of the Internal Revenue Service Code of 1986 to create tax-free savings accounts for individuals with disabilities. The bill, first introduced in 2006, aims to ease financial strains faced by individuals with disabilities by making tax-free savings accounts available to cover qualified expenses such as education, housing, and transportation. The bill would supplement, but not supplant, benefits provided through private insurances, the Medicaid program, the supplemental security income program, the beneficiary's employment, and other sources. Upon introduction, the legislation has earned 59 original House co-sponsors and 16 original Senate co-sponsors and is backed by more at least 50 local, state, and national disability advocacy groups, including the National Down Syndrome Society, The Arc, and Autism Speaks.

Congressman Crenshaw stated, "We stand together - House, Senate, and advocacy groups - with hands joined in a push to provide economic peace of mind and fairness to individuals with disabilities. Other Americans enjoy financial-planning tools that allow them to save for college and retirement, yet our tax code does not provide people with disabilities with the same option. Enormous financial struggles that most of us cannot imagine face this population, and they deserve a level playing field when it comes to planning for education, housing, retirement, and more. The *ABLE Act* helps ease the strains by making tax-free savings accounts available to cover qualified expenses. No longer would individuals with disabilities have to stand by and watch others use IRS-sanctioned tools to lay the groundwork for a brighter future."

Senator Robert Casey, Jr. (D-PA) stated, "Parents of children with disabilities face daily struggles that we can't even begin to imagine. This legislation will help make it easier for those families to save for their children's care and for their future. The *ABLE Act* will provide families with the financial peace of mind they need, and Congress should pass it immediately."

Senator Richard Burr (R-NC) stated, "Families of individuals with disabilities can face incredible burdens associated with the costs of healthcare, education, housing and transportation. Currently, families can save for their children's education through tax-favored 529 education

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savings accounts, but parents of disabled children do not have access to the same federal and state tax benefits to save for their child's future expenses. By allowing families to use 529 education accounts for disability-related expenses, this bill will make it easier for parents of disabled individuals to invest in their child's future, opening the door to a world of opportunities that might not have been available otherwise."

Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA) stated, "As the mom of a child with special needs and Co-Chair of the Congressional Down Syndrome Caucus, I know that federal policies can often limit those with disabilities from becoming fully independent. For example, when my son Cole was born, my husband and I were advised not to put any assets in Cole's name because it would penalize him if he needed to qualify for a government program someday. There are millions of other parents in this same situation. They would like to help their children improve their quality of life without jeopardizing their access to benefits. That's why we need the *ABLE Act*. This common-sense bill would allow parents to save for their children's futures and give kids with disabilities a chance to live the American Dream. I'm proud to join my colleagues in introducing this bill and I will continue to be a vocal leader on its behalf."

Congressman Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) stated, "We live in a nation where everyone has the right to reach for their full potential. The *ABLE Act* will give people with disabilities and their families, in Maryland and across the country, the opportunity to take charge of their own lives and their futures. It's based on the ideals that make America great, and I'm proud to be a part of this effort."

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