

Testimony of Colton Vazquez

Senate Special Committee on Aging Hearing

Saving with ABLE: Financial Security for Pennsylvanians with Disabilities

August 17, 2022

Good morning, Senator Casey. My name is Colton Vazquez, and I am 23 years old. I was born with multiple disabilities, and I live in Pittsburgh. And I have voted in every election since I turned 18 years old. I am a senior at Duquesne University. Thank you for inviting me to speak. I am here to talk to you about why my ABLE bank account is so important to me.

I started working and paying taxes when I was 14 years old. This summer I have 4 jobs. I love to work and I'm proud to earn my own money. I'm studying Theater and Acting at Duquesne University and want to work in the theater.

I travel to different cities to audition for theater jobs. I have to save money so I can pay for it. In June I flew to Orlando, Florida to audition for Sesame Street Live. I made it to the finals and have a real shot at working for Sesame Street. My dream is to become a member of the Wiggles and perform for kids. I am now saving my money to go to Australia and audition for the Wiggles. It will cost several thousands of dollars to do that. I met the Wiggles in Pittsburgh and performed on stage with them four years ago. I know I can do it. But I must have a way to save my money.

It has always been my dream to get my own place and get married. I also want to have a dog. All of these things cost lots of money. I have to be able to save money to do this. Without an ABLE account, I am only allowed to save \$2000. That is not enough money to buy a house or condo. If you allow me to save money, I can provide many of my own supports. I will always need some help, and I must have health insurance. But I am capable and need the chance to save money without being afraid of losing my other benefits.