



# SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

CHAIRMAN Bob Casey

## **The ABLE Age Adjustment Act (S.331)**

### **What is ABLE?**

ABLE programs were created following the passage of the Stephen Beck Jr., Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act in 2014. Through these state-run programs, individuals with disabilities, who acquire their disability prior to their 26th birthday, are eligible to open an ABLE account and save for their long-term care and disability expenses, without risking the loss of certain federal benefits. Millions of individuals with disabilities and their families depend on public benefits to meet their health care, housing and nutrition needs. These benefits are important to millions of Americans, but prior to the passage of ABLE, individuals could not accumulate more than \$2,000 in assets such as savings or retirement funds without risking the loss of needed benefits such as Supplemental Security Income and Medicaid.

Before the passage of ABLE, individuals were forced to choose between saving for long-term needs and their federal benefits. ABLE accounts, which can be used for needs such as healthcare, housing or education, can provide individuals and families with a measure of economic security and peace of mind. For someone with a disability, an ABLE Account also means they can work and earn money without fear of losing critical Social Security or Medicaid benefits.

Now individuals can open an ABLE account in 43 states and the District of Columbia, and save up to \$15,000 a year up to a total of \$100,000, without losing their SSI benefits, and can save an unlimited amount without jeopardizing healthcare provided through Medicaid. The savings can be used for disability related expenses, including home modifications, education, transportation and assistive technology.

### **What will the ABLE Age Adjustment Act do?**

Consistent with the intent of the original ABLE act, which was supported by 78 Senators, the ABLE Age Adjustment Act will expand the number of individuals with disabilities eligible to open ABLE accounts. Under the current law, only individuals with an age onset of disability prior to turning 26 are eligible. This bill would increase the age limit up to 46 years of age, providing any individual whose disability onset began prior to turning 46 the opportunity to open an ABLE account. This important change will not only expand access for individuals with disabilities, but improve the long-term viability of ABLE programs by expanding the number of active accounts.

**Cosponsors:** Senators Jerry Moran (R-KS), Ron Wyden (D-OR), John Boozman (R-AR), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Roger Marshall (R-KS), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Pat Toomey (R-PA), Jack Reed (D-RI) and Ben Cardin (D-MD).