



February 24, 2017

Senator Bill Dodd
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 5063
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 218 (Dodd) – The Qualified ABLE Program: Tax-Advantaged Savings Accounts

Dear Senator Dodd:

The California In-Home Supportive Service Consumer Alliance (CICA) is writing in support of SB 218, a measure that will prohibit the state from filing a claim against a beneficiary's CalABLE account for the payment of medical assistance paid under Medi-Cal. The excitement for new possibilities for people with disabilities that has come with the rollout of ABLE plans across the country has unfortunately been tempered by the Medicaid payback provision that currently exists in the federal ABLE legislation and Section 1396p of Title 42 of the United States Code. Limiting Medi-Cal recovery of CalABLE accounts would alleviate significant concerns held by individuals eager to participate in the CalABLE Program.

CICA represents a large population of individuals who receive SSI/SSP and the ability to save or receive monies for needed medical equipment, a child's or personal education, or other personal needs is difficult. The ABLE account will give family members, as well as friends and community organizations opportunity to contribute to an individual's personal needs.

ABLE accounts stand to be a game-changer in helping provide financial security for people with disabilities, with the potential to break the cycle of poverty that often results from the inability to save money as a result of receiving public benefits. Unfortunately, account enrollment across the country has been slow due to fears around Medicaid recovery. Like other states, the success of California’s ABLE program will rely on a high level of enrollment. SB 218 would allay these concerns and encourage program enrollment, as well as increase contribution levels.

Thank you for your commitment to empowering people with disabilities to finally save for the future they deserve. The California IHSS Consumer Alliance is a proud supporter of SB 218.

Sincerely,

Charles Bean

CHARLES BEAN
Executive Director

cc: Leslie S. Spahnn, Legislative Director
Senate Governance and Finance Committee