

Date: March 13, 2025

TO: Senator Renee Erickson & Members of the Senate Committee on
Government Efficiency

FR: Matthew Golden, Advocate

RE: Testimony in SUPPORT of ABLE Savings Program/SB281

Chair Erickson, & members of the committee thank you for the opportunity to share information on SB 281. I appreciate you all giving me the time today to speak in SUPPORT of the ABLE program. I am a resident of Leawood in KS Senate District 11, & I am in SUPPORT of this bill.

An ABLE (Achieving a Better Life Experience) account is a tax-advantaged savings program for Kansans with disabilities, like a 529 College Savings or Health Savings Account (HSA) for able-bodied Kansans. Without an ABLE account, Kansans with disabilities can only have \$2,000 in assets at any given time to remain eligible for many federal means-tested benefits programs, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI). With the Kansas ABLE Savings Plan, however, Kansans with a disability can save for their future without losing their eligibility for certain assistance programs, like SSI & Medicaid. The benefits include financial independence and the ability to save for the future without penalty.

Many Kansans with disabilities rely on ABLE accounts. ABLE accounts allow Kansans with disabilities to allocate a portion of their earnings and accept contributions from family as gifts, directing these into their ABLE account. This financial discipline allows Kansans with disabilities to work towards their aspirations without jeopardizing their benefits above the \$2,000 threshold, achieving financial independence for themselves and giving themselves, as well as their family & friends peace of mind.

Unfortunately, awareness & participation in the ABLE program remains low, with a large discrepancy between those who are enrolled in the program compared with the number of those eligible. Increased funding and continued strategic partnerships with disability advocates can help disseminate information to serve as trusted services, effectively encouraging more eligible individuals towards enrollment and contributing to the overall long-term health & success of the ABLE program. With the passing of SB 281, the Kansas State Treasurer's office will be able to continue partnerships to expand enrollment in the program.

With the passage of SB 281, efficiencies can increase, and seed money to help Kansans with disabilities start ABLE accounts will augment the stability of the ABLE program, significantly enhancing the financial wellbeing of Kansans with disabilities, providing them with valuable tools to achieve greater independence & stability.