



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David Carlucci

Senator Carlucci Passes ABLE Act

DAVID CARLUCCI June 19, 2015

| ISSUE: **DISABILITY**

Senator David Carlucci has passed S4472D/A7767B, legislation that will provide people with disabilities and their families the opportunity to create a tax-exempt savings account that can be used for maintaining health, independence and quality of life.

In December 2014, the Federal Government passed the Achieving a Better Life Experience also known as the ABLE Act. This legislation, allows family members or caregivers to save money for a loved one that has a disability, tax free. Now that New York has passed S4472D, they can take part in this historic program.

Millions of individuals with disabilities and their families depend on a wide variety of public benefits for income, health care and food and housing assistance. Historically, the eligibility for these public benefits has required people with disabilities to be financially insolvent, denying them the opportunity to plan for the future. For the first time in public policy, the ABLE Act recognizes the extra and significant costs of living with a disability.

“This legislation provides us with a real opportunity to make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities,” said Senator Carlucci. “Passing this important legislation gives our friends, neighbors and family members with disabilities throughout this state deserve a better, brighter and more secure future.”

“On behalf of our Board and CEO Jill Warner and all of us at Jawonio, we are delighted that both the Senate and Assembly passed the ABLE Act in support of providing choice and another pathway to independence.” Said Diana Hess, Chief Communications Officer for Jawonio. “This act will now give NYS the ability to mirror the federal guidelines and give people with special needs choices in their financial lives that will create opportunities to live their lives as independently as possible.”

"I am delighted that the ABLE Act has now passed and will be signed into law by the governor," said George Hoehmann, CEO of the Rockland Independent Living Center. "This landmark legislation will provide equality of access and enhance opportunities for people with disabilities as it relates to virtually every aspect of their lives. The ABLE Act will promote fuller integration into the community and greater independence. This is a great thing for all New Yorkers."

“We are pleased that the New York State Senate has passed this important legislation. This is a victory for the families of people with disabilities and will provide great comfort for thousands of family members who will be able to ensure that their loved ones will have the necessary resources to live as independently as possible in their communities,” said Susan Constantino, President & CEO, Cerebral Palsy Associations of New York State. “ We are thankful to Senator Carlucci, Assemblymember Gunther, and their colleagues in the Legislature for making it possible for people with disabilities to gain a new level of economic independence without impacting the benefits they so critically need.”

“ABLE’s passage in New York would not have been possible without the support of our legislative champions and grassroots advocates across New York,” said Stuart Spielman, senior policy advisor and counsel at Autism Speaks. “We extend our thanks to Senator David Carlucci and Assemblymember Aileen Gunther, who led their houses to this victory. And we hope to see Governor Cuomo quickly sign the bill so that families in the disability

community have a strong tool to plan for the financial futures of their loved ones.”

“We are thrilled that the New York legislature has passed a state ABLE Act, and we urge Governor Cuomo to sign the bill as soon as possible,” said Sara Weir, President of the National Down Syndrome Society. “The New York ABLE Program will empower New Yorkers with disabilities and their families to save for the future, explore more employment opportunities and live full, meaningful lives.”