



February 23, 2024

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
The Honorable Brian Feldman
2 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Re: Senate Bill 592: Maryland Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Program
- Materials for Individualized Education Program Meetings – Favorable Support**

Dear Chairman Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

I am writing to you on behalf of The Arc Central Chesapeake Region in SUPPORT of SB592: Maryland Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Program - Materials for Individualized Education Program Meetings.

The Arc Central Chesapeake Region serves over 3,000 children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families in Anne Arundel County and Maryland's Eastern Shore. The Arc Central Chesapeake Region's mission is supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to live the lives they choose by creating opportunities, promoting respect and equity, and providing access to services.

Caregivers of children with disabilities often worry about what their child's life will look like as they age. They must consider who will provide care for their child in the future, and how their child's unique needs will be met, so that their child is empowered to live their life as independently as possible. ABLE accounts allow people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to continue to access the benefits they need now, while saving for some of the significant additional costs they can expect as they age. **It is imperative that families have robust information on ABLE accounts readily available during IEP (Individualized Education Program) meetings because it enables them to start saving early and helps ease the anxiety of long-term financial planning for their child.**

At The Arc Central Chesapeake Region, we have seen great success with ABLÉ accounts and support over 90 people in our Living Options & Services program that utilize them. ABLÉ accounts are incredibly helpful for people who have received large back payments from Social Security or whose families have left them liquid-able assets, because they can keep the funds without being considered over-asset and potentially losing critical benefits. Consequently, **The Arc strongly encourages the people we support and their families to open these easy-to-navigate ABLÉ accounts.**

The Arc Central Chesapeake Region supports this vital legislation and urges the Committee for a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jonathon Rondeau".

Jonathon Rondeau
President & CEO