



## **HB 806: Income Tax – Personal Exemption – Disabled Individuals – SUPPORT**

### Testimony of Independence Now

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Independence Now is a federally established nonprofit disability resource and advocacy organization operated by and for people with disabilities. Center staff and Boards are at least 51% people with disabilities. We are part of a nationwide network of Centers for Independent Living (CILs) providing the following core services: Information and Referral; Advocacy; Peer Support; Independent Living Skills training and Transition Services. We serve people with all disabilities of all ages.

**Independence Now is in support of HB 806** Individuals who have physical disabilities or a family member with a physical disability will benefit greatly from this bill. When a person has a physical disability, there are additional life expenses incurred that others do not face. For instance, making sure living space and vehicles are accessible as well as purchasing devices that make living more independent possible, like cooking equipment. Sometimes technology is purchased to make it possible for someone with a physical disability to turn on and off lights or answer the phone.

One very practical example involves cooking dinner. Our consumers and staff with physical disabilities often need to buy food that is partially prepared to make cooking at home possible. This is more expensive than purchasing food one prepares completely independently. While this may seem small, over the course of a year it adds up to much higher grocery bills.

Obviously health care expenses can also increase dollars spent by an individual or a family. Many people with physical disabilities need disposable items like catheters, adult diapers, wound care supplies, gloves and other items that are not covered by insurance. These items are detrimental to the health of a person and must be purchased, adding to the expense that is unique to individuals with physical disabilities.

Allowing a tax exemption for individuals with a physical disability of \$1000 will lighten the expenses for an individual or a family facing these unique costs.