

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 144 FINANCE- MEDICAL RECORD FEES-
ATTORNEYS REPRESENTING PATIENTS
JANUARY 31,2024
Senate Finance Committee

Good afternoon:

My name is Stephanie Means. I suffer from fibromyalgia, seizures, syncope, rheumatoid arthritis in my right knee, migraines, anxiety, depression, and bi-polar symptoms. I am unable to walk one city block due to my physical disabilities. I filed a Social Security disability case with the help of my lawyer in February of 2021. It took almost 3 years for my case to go before a Judge and I was approved for benefits in December of 2023. I needed my lawyer to help me with the process of filing the case, filing the appeals, and presenting the case to the Judge at the hearing with all my medical records. The staff at London Disability requested my medical records from all my treatment sources. Scott London paid up front for my medical records as it was necessary to present evidence to prove my disability.

I don't think that I would have been able to manage the difficult process of obtaining medical records in a timely fashion without my lawyer's help due to not knowing which records to order, not having a fax machine to fax the request, or to upload requests via certain portals. I also was not able to afford to pay for the records due to limited income. The cost of these medical records exceeded \$100.00, and that cost has now been passed on to me as my out-of-pocket expense.

It is not fair for me to pay for these medical records since I had been behind in paying my rent and needed every penny for my medicines and food. My lawyer helped me immensely by obtaining my medical records. I would not have been able to request my records from all the different treating sources without the help of my lawyer.

I favor and support this bill to waive the cost of medical records for Social Security applicants who are being helped by a lawyer to obtain the evidence to present at the hearing. People suffering from physical and mental disabilities, who have limited mobility, limited or no resources, unable to navigate the cumbersome and difficult process of obtaining their own medical records, need a lawyer's help with the process.

My lawyer helped me with every step of the case from the beginning to the end and obtained all the necessary evidence to prove my disability. Medical records should be free of charge for the lawyers who help clients with their Social Security disability case as most people who have not worked for 2-3 years due to their disabilities are unable to afford the cost associated with obtaining the medical records.

Thank you.

X. 

Stephanie Means
430 N. Luzerne
Baltimore, MD 21224
410-522-8613