



April 3, 2018

Kansas State Legislature
House Taxation Committee
Regarding SB 449
Position: **SUPPORT**

Dear Chairman Johnson and Committee Members,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify in support of SB 449, which would make ABLE accounts even more accessible to Kansans with disabilities. My name is Sarah Meitner and I'm a resident of Hays. My husband, Chad, and I have five children, including a 4-year-old named Abraham who has Down syndrome. I am here to support SB 449 in honor of Abe and on behalf of the three dozen families who belong to the Northwest Kansas Down Syndrome Society. Our group represents families from more than 10 counties in Northwest Kansas. I am also a Western Kansas parent ambassador with the National Down Syndrome Society.

My family is only 4 years into our journey as advocates for persons with Down syndrome and other disabilities. Our son, Abe, is a bright, valuable, and contributing member of our family. He – like all people with Down syndrome -- deserves to live in a world that is supportive of his differences and accepting of his unique gifts.

It is because of Abe and all Kansans with Down syndrome that I strongly support SB 449 that would remove ABLE account barriers and allow for a tax deduction. Shortly after Abe was born in 2013, we opened a Learning Quest 529 account in his name – just like we did for his four older siblings. We've contributed to it faithfully for four years and celebrated earlier this year when the federal law guaranteed that we could transfer Abe's 529 account to an ABLE account without penalty. However, after exploring the option, we decided that it was fiscally more advantageous to keep Abe's 529 as is and delay opening his ABLE account. We would very much like to support the Kansas ABLE program and transfer the funds, but the tax benefit and threat of clawback later have deterred us.

As a group, the Northwest Kansas Down Syndrome Society has partnered with other local disability groups to offer training for families on special needs trusts and ABLE accounts. We have

encouraged families to open ABLE accounts for their children with disabilities. We will continue to support the ABLE program and would love to share the good news about the passage of SB 449.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

Sarah Meitner

Mom to Abraham

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