



February 19, 2019

**The Honorable Senator Marilyn Moore and Representative Catherine Abercrombie**  
Co-Chairs, Human Services Committee  
300 Capitol Ave, Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie and Members of the Human Services Committee,

On behalf of the Epilepsy Foundation of Connecticut and the more than 36,000 individuals living with epilepsy in Connecticut, we urge you to **SUPPORT House Bill 7093, "AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO INCREASE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES."**

The Epilepsy Foundation of Connecticut (EFCT), located in Middletown, leads the fight to overcome the challenges of living with epilepsy and to accelerate therapies to stop seizures, find cures and save lives. We foster the wellbeing of children and adults affected by seizures through educational activities, advocacy, recreational and direct services throughout Connecticut. Epilepsy is a medical condition that produces seizures affecting a variety of mental and physical functions. Approximately 1 in 26 Americans will develop epilepsy at some point in their lifetime.

The issue of employment is particularly important to the epilepsy community because people living with epilepsy consistently have higher levels of unemployment compared to the general population. According to data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) surveys, people with a lifetime prevalence of epilepsy were more than three times as likely to be unemployed as people who do not have epilepsy. Further, the epilepsy community is more likely to be underemployed in jobs where they have more skill, education, or training than what is required which results in their earning capacity not being met.<sup>1</sup> Employment is also a critically important aspect of quality of life for the epilepsy community because of access to health insurance through an employer. With the costs of prescription drugs and health plan premiums on the rise, the epilepsy community struggles to afford medications without employer insurance plans. This task force would be instrumental in identifying potential avenues for individuals with epilepsy to obtain employment. Finding and keeping a job is important for everyone, but much more difficult for people with epilepsy.

The Epilepsy Foundation of Connecticut urges you to support H.B. 7093 and to continue to champion policies that improve access to employment opportunities for all vulnerable populations including those with epilepsy. Please do not hesitate to contact Michael Finley, CT Government Relations, at 860-346-1924 or [Michael@Epilepsyct.com](mailto:Michael@Epilepsyct.com) with any questions or concerns.

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<sup>1</sup> Bishop, M. 2002. Barriers to employment amongst people with epilepsy: Report of a focus group. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation* 17 (4):281-286