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Testimony RE: SB 980-**AN ACT ELIMINATING INCOME AND ASSET LIMITS FOR THE MED-CONNECT PROGRAM FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES.**

Good morning Chairpersons Moore and Abercrombie, Ranking Members Berthel and Case, and honorable members of the Human Services Committee.

Thank you for considering my testimony in **strong support** of SB 980, *AN ACT ELIMINATING INCOME AND ASSET LIMITS FOR THE MED-CONNECT PROGRAM FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES*. For too many years, programs that have served persons with disabilities have also imposed barriers to independence and the pursuit of goals that are accessible to the rest of us. Asset and income limits create such barriers. The Med-Connect Program recognizes that persons with disabilities are capable of making a living wage, and yet it restricts the amount of their earnings and savings. Individual savings are the very vehicle that would afford persons with disabilities the opportunity to become more independent and put them on the road to needing fewer state resources.

I am the parent of an adult son with autism and intellectual disabilities who is in the Med-Connect program. He receives job coaching services through the Department of Developmental Services under a Title XIX support waiver, and is able to work 36 hours per week. In the future, he may be able to live independently provided he has the proper supports in place. Unfortunately, in the State of Connecticut, it is unlikely that services such as housing and support for independent living will be available to him. A state that has systematically underfunded its support agencies should provide an alternative to persons with disabilities so they are able to secure some of these services themselves. To become self-reliant, my son should be allowed to save without limitation toward that goal. While ABLE accounts provide some relief, they are only one piece of the puzzle.

It is my sincere hope that the committee will recognize the positive impact of this proposed legislation, vote to favorably report it out of committee and fight for its passage. Thank you for your hard work in making life better for all Connecticut citizens.