



Municipality of Anchorage

Ethan Berkowitz, Mayor

Department of Health and Human Services

February 9, 2016

Patrick Reinhart
Executive Director,
Governor Council on Disabilities and Special Education
3601 C Street, Suite 740
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Dear Patrick:

On behalf of the Municipality of Anchorage ADA Advisory Commission, we would like to express our support for the Achieving A Better Life Experience (ABLE) legislation pending before the Alaska legislature (HB188 and SB104).

The Anchorage ADA Advisory Commission is a seven member municipal advisory board that assists the Anchorage Department of Health and Human Services, the Mayor of Anchorage and the Anchorage Assembly on issues of importance to people with disabilities living, working and visiting Anchorage.

This bill would allow financial institutions to issue tax advantage savings accounts for eligible persons with a disability. Such accounts will allow for qualified disability-related expenses not covered by public programs. ABLE Act accounts also work towards reducing barriers to employment for Alaskans with disabilities by creating a tool which will allow the income savings earned from a job to not jeopardizing the public benefits. Currently, Alaskans with disabilities cannot have more than \$2,000 of financial resources before losing some or all of their needed public benefits. These accounts have the potential of assisting individuals with disabilities in a pathway out of poverty and foster greater independence and self-sufficiency.

The Anchorage ADA Advisory Commission supports HB188 and SB104. This bill enables Alaskans with disabilities to save and become independent and self sufficient in the future. Thank you for your support of the bill and if you have any questions, please let me know.

Sincerely,

David Ziemer

Chair, Municipality of Anchorage ADA Commission