

**A Better Life (ABLE) Advisory Committee
Minutes of the Meeting
December 22, 2015, 2:00 pm**

Members Present:

Richard D. Gray, Deputy Treasurer, Office of the State Treasurer
Mary Phil Guinan, Assistant Treasurer, Office of the State Treasurer
Jeff Beckham, DAS
Mark Schok, DSS
Kevin Lawton, DDS
Jonathan Slifka, Governor's Liaison to the Disability Community
Jack Frost
Marina Derman
Sharon Geanuracos
Shelagh McClure, CT Council on Developmental Disabilities
Steve Pintarich, Captain American Legion Honor Guard
Robert Shea, Attorney

Members Absent:

Senator Beth Bye

Call to Order

At 2:08 p.m., Assistant Treasurer Mary Phil Guinan called the meeting to order.

Welcoming Remarks and Introductions

Ms. Guinan greeted the Committee. She then introduced Deputy Treasurer Richard Gray. She assured the committee that the office of the Treasurer was dedicated to the ABLE program, and would be glad of any input concerning implementing the platform.

Overview of the ABLE Act

Ms. Guinan gave an outline of the ABLE act, stating that it was loosely modeled after the 529 plan, with noted exceptions - there must be a designated beneficiary, the contribution limit is \$14,000, and it gives a chance for a savings account that was not available before. Also, states have the ability to join forces in order to save expenses if the potential volume of accounts is smaller than anticipated.

The expected features of the account should be ease of use, with the design simple to use, with flexible contribution options. Also, the risk to account holders should be as minimal as possible. Potential challenges include using the account on a trust basis, income eligibility and also determining how

eligibility is determined. It was mentioned that income was not a determining factor for eligibility. An account beneficiary must be under the age of 26 in order to open an ABLE account. The bill currently states that a Doctor's note would be needed to qualify an individual, and a question was raised on the potential for fraud.

It was discussed that Connecticut be a state where expenditures need not be reported, however, that a thorough record keeping is needed in the event that expenses might be questioned due to the varied ways funds might be needed. The necessity of a reporting structure was also deliberated. Due to the potential that the funds might be used for expenses not originally listed, accurate record keeping would be essential.

The question was raised about the actual number of potential accounts, and if thought to be a minor amount, would another state be considered to collaborate with. Mr. Gray stated that management fees should be less when states contract with multiple programs. Currently, various states were being viewed as potential partnerships, however, without actual funds appropriated; this was still in the early stages. The hiring of a consultant was also contingent on the amount of funds available at this time. It was discussed that the administrators of the CHET account become a resource to also assume the duties on the ABLE accounts, with the potential fees be self-supporting, however, at the present time, there has not been anyone who has volunteered to oversee the account.

It was raised that initially the accounts had the potential for operating at a loss until the amount of accounts increased, and if so, where might the funds come from? Different ideas such as grants, non-profit contributions and other alternative funding were discussed.

The meeting was then brought to a close, with a suggestion that other attendees, such as representatives from OPM and DRS be included. Also, additional ideas for the next meeting could be emailed to Ms. Guinan for discussion. It was raised that the next meeting be held on Tuesday, January 19th at 2:00pm - all were in agreement.

The meeting was brought to a close.