



Make today a breakthrough.

January 25, 2021

The Honorable Bob Casey
United States Senate
393 Russell Bldg.
Washington DC 20510-3804

Dear Senator Casey,

Cure SMA is the leading national organization that supports and advocates for individuals with spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) in Pennsylvania and across the country. **Cure SMA is pleased to support the Disability Employment Incentive Act aimed at promoting employment for individuals with SMA and other disabilities.** Your legislation would help to remove the employment barriers that exist for individuals with SMA and other jobseekers with disabilities.

SMA is a progressive neurodegenerative disease that robs individuals of physical strength, taking away their ability to walk, eat, and breathe. SMA impacts 1 in 11,000 births in the United States. In **Pennsylvania**, 12 babies are born annually with SMA. In addition, more than 256,000 Pennsylvania residents are carriers of the SMA genetic mutation. If both parents are SMA carriers, every child they have together has a 25% chance of being diagnosed with SMA, regardless of race, ethnicity, and gender.

Employment was among the highest priorities identified by adults and young adults with SMA in a recent 2020 Cure SMA survey. Employment provides individuals with SMA independence, financial security, and the ability to live and fully participate in their communities. About 13% of the adults and young adults (over age 18) with SMA who responded to our survey reported that they were unemployed, but actively seeking employment. The joblessness rate for individuals with SMA compares closely to the overall unemployment rate for all individuals with disabilities, which the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported as being 11% in December 2020. During the same period, the unemployment rate for individuals without disabilities was 6.3%.

The Disability Employment Incentive Act (DEIA) would help incentivize the hiring of individuals with SMA and other disabilities by expanding tax credits for employers who hire individuals with disabilities and for businesses who make their workplaces more accessible for their employees with disabilities. DEIA would increase the Work Opportunity Tax Credit to a maximum of \$5,000 (from \$2,400) for employers who hire an eligible person with a disability. In addition, DEIA would double the Disability Access Expenditures Tax Credit (from \$5,000 to \$10,000) for small businesses who incur an expense for making their workplaces accessible for employees with disabilities. Finally, DEIA would increase the Architectural and Transportation Barrier Tax Credit to \$30,000 (from \$15,000) for expenses during a single year to remove a physical barrier such as a building entrance or transportation vehicle. These sensible



tax credit expansions will make workplaces more accessible for all workers and their customers and will further incentivize current and future hiring, retention, and promotion of all people with disabilities, including individuals with SMA.

Thank you for helping to promote the employment and financial security of individuals with SMA and other disabilities. Cure SMA strongly supports the Disability Employment Incentive Act and we stand ready to assist you and your team in securing passage in 2021. For more information, your staff can contact Maynard Friesz, Vice President for Policy and Advocacy at Cure SMA, at maynard.friesz@curesma.org or 202-871-8004.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K. A. Hobby".

Kenneth Hobby
President
Cure SMA

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maynard Friesz".

Maynard Friesz
Vice President of Policy & Advocacy
Cure SMA