

For Immediate Release September 30, 2024

NOTE: Video, interviews and images from today's press conference will be available <u>here</u>.

Treasurer Stacy Garrity and Senator Lisa Baker: PA ABLE Savings Program Surpasses \$125 Million in Assets

Savings program gives people with disabilities greater control of their finances

Forty Fort, PA — Treasury Stacy Garrity and state Senator Lisa Baker (R-20) today visited the Wyoming Valley Children's Association to celebrate the <u>PA ABLE Savings</u> <u>Program</u> surpassing \$125 million in assets, a major program milestone. PA ABLE (Achieving a Better Life Experience) accounts help Pennsylvanians with disabilities and their families to save for disability-related expenses without impacting important benefits.

"Earlier this year, we announced that PA ABLE had surpassed \$100 million in assets," Treasurer Garrity said. "The fact that this program has grown by more than 25 percent so quickly shows how important it is to Pennsylvanians with disabilities and their families. I'm constantly inspired by the people I meet who use PA ABLE, and I'm proud to promote this program everywhere I go. I hope this announcement encourages even more people to see how PA ABLE can help them save for a more secure future."

"The message today is we have a program that helps families meet important needs and realize goals. The pace of contributions means people have confidence ABLE is well designed and well run," said Sen. Baker, a key leader in the effort to create PA ABLE. "It's a welcome reminder of the good that can happen when we concentrate on policies to uplift people, rather than dictate to them. Empowerment works."

"For years, people with disabilities were barred from saving for the future, which meant they couldn't save for a home, purchase needed assistive technology, or save for an accessible car. That is why I worked to create ABLE, to knock down a barrier that people with disabilities face as they work to improve their lives," said Senator Bob Casey (D-PA), who led the federal effort to authorize ABLE accounts. "Nearly ten years later, the program has become a lifeline for over 180 thousand people with disabilities across the nation, with more than \$125 million saved in Pennsylvania alone. I'm grateful to Treasurer Garrity for her work to make this program a success and to bring attention to what we've accomplished for Pennsylvanians and Americans with disabilities."

"We were thrilled to welcome Treasurer Garrity and Senator Baker to tour the Wyoming Valley Children's Association and celebrate the PA ABLE savings program reaching an impressive \$125 million in assets," said Nina DeiTos Zanon, Executive Director of WVCA. "For 100 years, WVCA has been dedicated to nurturing the potential of all children, with and without developmental delays, through quality education and therapeutic services. Programs like PA ABLE are an important part of uplifting and supporting our community, and it's critical to provide these financial resources for families of children with special needs. Together, we can build a brighter future for the children who need us the most. Thank you to Treasurer Garrity, Senator Baker, and the entire team who works on the PA ABLE program, for supporting educational and financial programs that make a real difference in the lives of children in Pennsylvania."

States were authorized to create ABLE programs with the passage of federal ABLE legislation in 2014, spearheaded by Senator Casey. At the state level, PA ABLE was enacted in 2016 with Senator Baker's leadership. Since the first PA ABLE account opened in 2017, the program has grown to become the largest in the National ABLE Alliance and one of the largest in the country.

PA ABLE continues to grow quickly, and there are now nearly 10,000 PA ABLE accounts with more than \$135 million saved.

PA ABLE offers seven different savings and investment options, including an interestbearing checking account. PA ABLE account owners can contribute up to \$18,000 per year. Contributions can be deducted from PA state income taxes, and owners pay no federal or state income taxes on account growth when used for qualified expenses.

ABLE account owners who are employed can also contribute through ABLE to Work, which provides additional employment opportunities and earning potential.

Treasurer Garrity has been committed to reducing fees for PA ABLE account owners and strengthening ABLE programs nationwide. She is the inaugural chair of the ABLE Savings Plans Network, an affiliate of the National Association of State Treasurers, which works to increase awareness and encourage growth of ABLE programs. Starting in 2025, a new tax credit will encourage businesses to support their employees saving with PA ABLE. Pennsylvania employers will be eligible for a 25 percent tax credit on matching employer contributions of up to \$500 per employee per year.

And beginning on January 1, 2026, access to ABLE programs will be greatly expanded. Treasurer Garrity was a strong advocate for the federal ABLE Age Adjustment Act, which was sponsored by Senator Casey and had almost unanimous support from Pennsylvania's congressional delegation. Currently, to be eligible to save with an ABLE program, a person's disability must onset prior to their 26th birthday. With the passage of the ABLE Age Adjustment Act, the onset age will increase to 46 starting on January 1, 2026, and will expand ABLE access to millions more Americans, including one million Veterans.

To learn more about PA ABLE, and how to start saving, visit <u>paable.gov</u>, email <u>info@paable.gov</u> or call 855-529-2253.

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