

House Finance and Taxation Committee

House Bill 1244 – January 23, 2023

Testimony of Denise Harvey, P&A Director of Program Services

Chairman Headland and members of the House Finance and Taxation Committee.

I am Denise Harvey, Director of Program Services with Protection & Advocacy (P&A).

P&A protects the human, civil and legal rights of people with disabilities. The agency's programs and services seek to make positive changes for people with disabilities where we live, learn, work and play.

P&A has two employment programs. The Protection & Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS) program works with social security beneficiaries to resolve barriers to employment and increase employment opportunities. The Client Assistance Program (CAP) provides assistance in informing and advising clients and client applicants of available benefits under the Rehabilitation Act and assists and advocates for clients and client applicants in their relationships with projects, programs and services provided under this Act, including Vocational Rehabilitation.

The Vocational Rehabilitation division would be well qualified to determine who has a most significant disability and requires customized employment or supportive employment to obtain competitive integrated employment. The increase in the tax credit to support employment opportunities for persons with developmental disabilities and severe mental illness will benefit employers and assist with the workforce shortage

in our state. Employment can bring these persons with disabilities out of poverty and reduce their reliance on social security and other programs that provide financial assistance. The tax incentive offered to employers would be a valuable tool for increasing employment for persons with more significant disabilities, which is a top priority for programs serving these persons and a wise fiscal choice for the use of state funds.

I respectfully request support for HB 1244. Thank you for your time and I would be glad to answer any questions.

Denise Harvey, Director of Program Services

Protection & Advocacy

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