

From: Mary and Frankie Stites

RE: Supporting Easter Seals Request for Renewal on the Tax Check Off

Good Morning Senators, thank you for the opportunity to speak today about our experience with Easter Seals. I am Mary Stites and this is my son. Frankie is 40 years old and he lives with me and he attends the Easter Seals Explores program. For over 15 years Frank has worked with Easter Seals. First, they helped him to find a job and provided job coaching, and supervision. Now he is in a program where he can exercise and maintain his fitness, participate in many learning activities, volunteers in the community. In addition he has made lots of friends at the program and looks forward coming each Monday.

He has always needed to be in a setting that provides supervision and support. Frankie has trouble communicating with others as well as making decisions with regard to his health and safety. The aging process has made him much slower and his physical stamina has decreased.

My 1<sup>st</sup> husband and I had 3 children Frank is our youngest. Having Frank put tremendous strain on our marriage and as a result we did not stay together. I remarried although my second husband he is now deceased. I work to support Frank and me. Because Frank goes to Easter Seals 5 days each week I am able to take care of most of our needs. If he was not in that program, I don't know what I would do.

Frank is just one person, but he truly represents so many of the people that come to Easter Seals for services. Most of the children and adults who use these programs are able to live more independently and/or with their families because they have Easter seals to provide training, recreation, rehabilitation. We all want our children to live fulfilling lives. Frank is extremely happy and I know that is in large part due to his very active and full days at Easter Seals and the many friends he has made there.

I too am more than satisfied that I can support my son and continue to have him live with me, rather than in a more institutional setting. Please vote to have Easter Seals remain on the tax Check Off. You are helping me and so many other Coloradoans with your support. Thank you.

Mary Stites  
Denver Resident