Exterior of the State Capitol building in Idaho. Flags billow beneath its massive dome.

♫ upbeat acoustic guitar music ♫

DAVID: I'm David Decker, I'm from Jerome, Idaho.

I'm part of the EPIC Committee and also a member

of the Idaho Self Advocate Leadership Network.

In 2017, self advocates like myself in Idaho

played a big key role in the passage

of the ABLE Act here in our state.

♫ music continues ♫

A bill titled HR 647, the ABLE Act.

The ABLE Act allows individuals like myself

with a developmental disability

to be able to save money in a special savings account

without risking eligibility

to our Social Security and our Medicaid.

No matter what laws you're about to push in your state,

we hope this video helps you develop

a plan for success.

Title screen. Tips for Success in your state. Tip number one: Create a stakeholder group.

Mel Leviton, who uses a wheelchair, is interviewed in the State Capitol.

MEL: My name is Mel Leviton

and I'm the executive director

of the State Independent Living Council for Idaho.

Legislators often think they know what people need

and what communities need,

but until they talk to us, they don't necessarily.

GRANT: Well I'm Senator Grant Burgoyne

and I represent parts of Boise and Garden City

in the Idaho State Senate.

I contacted the Council on Developmental Disabilities

to see what we might do to get the ball rolling in Idaho.

We then got other stakeholders involved

who had the pulse of the people

with developmental disabilities

who are the intended beneficiaries

of the federal program.

I think what we came up with

was not only acceptable to the disability community,

I think they were highly supportive

of the approach that we took.

Title screen. Tip number two: Contact your representatives any way that you can.

DAVID: Self advocates have a big role.

It is very important that you be a part of the change

in your state by contacting your legislators,

whether it's email, snail mail,

phone calls, make an appointment.

They're always great to talk to in person.

MEL: Christine from the DD Council and I,

we developed a blocking system.

She would go out into the hallway,

slowly walk a legislator back over to where I was,

which is usually near a bench,

and so we essentially could kinda corral 'em.

You can't just wait for opportunities,

you really have to make those opportunities happen.

Title screen. Tip number three: Tell your story.

Shiloh Blackburn, who uses a power chair, is interviewed at the Capitol.

SHILOH: Your story matters.

Your experiences make it real for them.

My name is Shiloh Blackburn.

I'm the Idaho State President

for the Idaho Self Advocate Leadership Network.

Most people with disabilities,

we live below the poverty level.

If you have bills or medication you need to buy,

repairs on your vehicle or repairs on your chair,

the ABLE account would allow me

to pay for those repairs, to pay for any medication

that isn't covered by Medicaid.

I don't have the luxury or the money

every time that happens to pay outta pocket.

GRANT: Hearing from people

with developmental disabilities

on this and other legislation that I brought is the key.

JACK: My name is Alan Jack Hansen, Jr.

I'm from Boise, Idaho.

I'm a disability self advocate.

I appeared in front of the House and the Senate

Health and Welfare Committees.

As a direct result of my testimony,

I got a standing ovation.

People with disabilities have always wanted to save.

This is their opportunity.

I can save up for a car 'cause

being able to live on my own,

very important to me.

DAVID: I sent my testimony into my legislators

and made sure that they knew

how important the ABLE Act was for myself.

JACK: In order for the legislators to understand

your point of view, get involved.

Use your voice.

You have a voice.

SHILOH: For Idaho, the ABLE Act will begin in July

or August of this year, so it's going to be exciting.

It's going to open a whole new world.

JACK: I'll be one of the first people to sign up.

You can bet on it.

DAVID: If you're getting ready to push legislation,

please visit EpicNationalPartners.org/Legislation

for more information on how to pass legislation

in your state.

♫ ♫ ♫

EPIC animated logo. Equal Partners Interstate Congress.

Produced by Rooted in Rights