Subject: Budget Proposals from Epilepsy Ireland

Dear Deputy/Senator,

I hope this finds you safe and well.

I am contacting you in relation to Budget 23 and in support of a proposal that has been resubmitted to the Ministers for Social Protection; Finance; and Public Expenditure & Reform by Epilepsy Ireland.

***(If you have personal experience of this issue, we recommend that you provide details of how you have been impacted as part of your correspondence.)***

The proposal concerns access to Free Travel passes for people with epilepsy and is one I wholeheartedly support due to the unique accessibility issues that many people with epilepsy can face.

If a person with epilepsy holds a driving license and experiences a breakthrough seizure, they automatically lose their license for one year. They will not be able to get their driving license back until they become one-year seizure free.

For this reason, Epilepsy Ireland have proposed that those who lose their license in such circumstances automatically be awarded a Free Travel Pass for the period that they are “off the road”.

Other persons with epilepsy will unfortunately never be able to drive due to the uncontrolled nature of their condition. Like the situation outlined above, this can lead to a dependence on public transport and can have financial & social implications.

As it stands, the Free Travel scheme is only accessible through other Departmental payments such as Invalidity Pension and Disability Allowance – benefits which many people in these circumstances will not qualify for due to the nature of their condition.

For this reason, Epilepsy Ireland is proposing that the Free Travel scheme be decoupled from these payments to provide a direct access route to have a person’s eligibility for the benefit be directly assessed.

I understand that there has been contact throughout the year between Epilepsy Ireland and the Department of Social Protection and according to recent Parliamentary Question replies from the Minister, exploratory work on the proposals Epilepsy Ireland have put forward is continuing by Department officials.

I hope you will agree that both these proposals are measured and achievable requests. As my local representative, I would appreciate any support you can give to these proposals to address this longstanding issue for people with epilepsy. I am aware that Epilepsy Ireland have contacted every TD & Senator with details of their proposal on this most important matter.

I would appreciate if you could reach out to Epilepsy Ireland Advocacy & Communications Manager, Paddy McGeoghegan, on pmcgeoghegan@epilepsy.ie to discuss this and be briefed on this matter further and that you work with Epilepsy Ireland to have this issue finally addressed in Budget 23.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and I look forward to receiving your reply.

Yours sincerely,

***Name***

***Address***

***Contact Details.***