*(We recommend that if you have direct personal experience of this issue to provide details of this as part of your correspondence to your local representative. This gives a clearer picture of how you are being impacted by this issue and highlights clear reasons as to why it needs to be addressed.)*

**Subject: Free Travel for People with Epilepsy**

Dear Deputy/Senator,

I trust this finds you well. I am contacting you regarding the ongoing campaign by Epilepsy Ireland to improve access to the free travel scheme for people with epilepsy.

I fully support the proposals that have been put forward to the Department for Social Protection and the Minister for Social Protection. As my local representative, I am seeking that you outline your support for the campaign and raise this at every available opportunity with the Government to address this longstanding issue which is facing people with epilepsy in our constituency and across Ireland.

As a result of their condition, many people with epilepsy face unique accessibility issues. Oftentimes, this mean that they depend on public transport or on family, friends, and neighbours for transport to help continue in employment, pursue further education, or remain socially active.

Currently, the Free Travel scheme can only be accessed via other Departmental qualifying payments such as Disability Allowance or Invalidity Pension. However, due to the individual nature of epilepsy, many of those living with the condition will not quality for these payments – as they could be working full time, or the nature of their condition will not meet the strict medical criteria associated with these payments.

However, they will still be unable to drive due to their condition until they become at least one year seizure free – something which will unfortunately not be attainable for some of those living with epilepsy.

Epilepsy Ireland have proposed that the Free Travel scheme be decoupled from qualifying payments, so that people with epilepsy can directly apply for the benefit to the Department. They have also proposed that for those with epilepsy who lose their license due to a breakthrough seizure and hold a driving license, that they be awarded a travel pass for the period that they are “off the road” (at least one year, until they become one year seizure-free).

I understand that in advance of Budget 23, Epilepsy Ireland were in contact with every TD & Senator, providing details of their proposals. These proposals could have a hugely positive impact for minimal cost – with Epilepsy Ireland estimating that the cost of their proposal would be approximately €600k. You can revisit the proposals [**by visiting the Epilepsy Ireland website.**](https://www.epilepsy.ie/sites/www.epilepsy.ie/files/Budget%20Proposal%202023%20-%20Epilepsy%20Ireland_0.pdf)

This issue is very important to me and my family and we want to see progress made on same. We would appreciate if you could add your voice to the campaign and use every avenue available to you to have this issue addressed.

I would encourage you to contact Epilepsy Ireland Advocacy & Communications Manager, Paddy McGeoghegan by emailing **pmcgeoghegan@epilepsy.ie** should you wish to discuss the proposals in more detail and to be briefed on Epilepsy Ireland’s ongoing contact with the Department regarding these proposals.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and I look forward to hearing about you regarding this important campaign.

Yours sincerely,

**Name**

**Address**

**Contact Details**