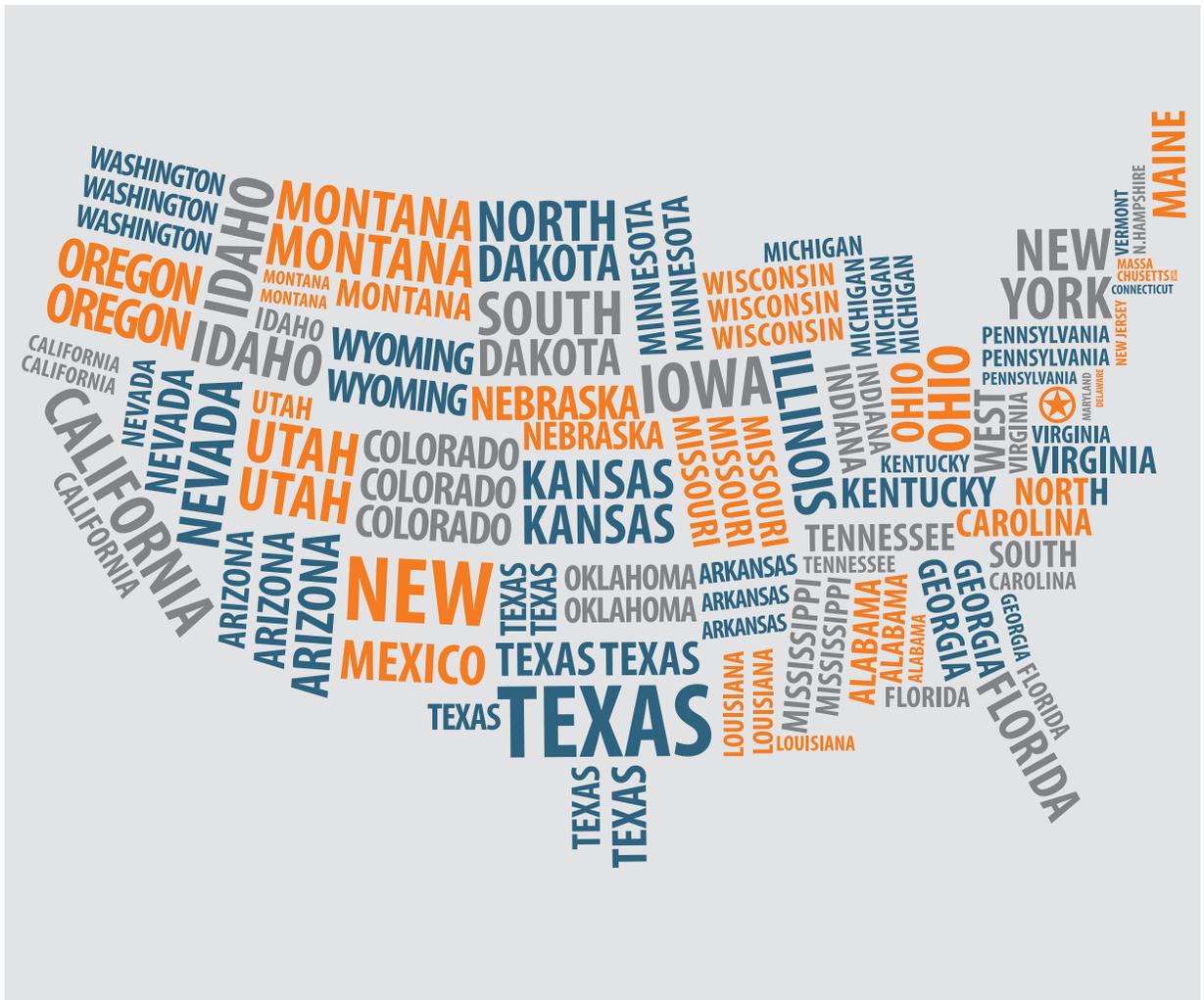




For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities

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State Advocacy Matters



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CIVIL RIGHTS



The Arc of Illinois supported and Governor Rauner signed [HB 4257](#). This bill directs the Department of Human Services to make wallet-sized disability identification card available to individuals with I/DD and persons with cognitive, affective, or relational disabilities upon their request.

The Arc of New Jersey supported [Assembly Bill 926](#) which changes pejorative terminology referring to persons with certain disabilities or substance use disorders to person-first language to ensure that individuals with disabilities are referred to appropriately and respectfully. The bill received unanimous support and was voted out of the Assembly Human Services Committee.

COMMUNITY-BASED LONG TERM SUPPORTS & SERVICES



Deborah Linton, CEO of **The Arc of Florida**, was quoted in a *Florida Times-Union* [editorial](#) calling for measures to end Florida's 20,000-person waitlist for community-based long term supports and services. Florida ranks 48th out of 50 in spending on community programs for people with disabilities, according to research from the University of Colorado.

The Arc of Illinois supported and Governor Bruce Rauner signed [HB 6086](#). This bill requires the Illinois Department of Human Services to consider the length of time an individual has spent on the Prioritization of Urgency of Need for Services list (waiting list) when selecting individuals for services.

The Indiana General Assembly's Interim Study Committee on Fiscal Policy recommended a study of new federal Home and Community Based Services rules, as well as rates set for the provision of those services. The study will include an assessment of current services offered and what changes need to be made in order to meet the needs of individuals and implement new rules. Kim Dodson, Executive Director of **The Arc of Indiana**, testified in favor of the study.

The Arc of New Jersey supported [A1449/S1041](#), which requires the Department of Human Services (DHS) to develop a timeline that individuals with I/DD and their families can reference as they apply for services as well as state and federal benefits. This timeline would list activities that individuals with I/DD may engage in, at a certain age or range of ages, in order to gain the benefit of a state or federal program or fulfill an obligation. The activities on the timeline would include, for example, applying for adult services for individuals with I/DD, applying for assistance from state or federal housing programs, and applying for benefits from the Social Security administration. This timeline would be posted on the websites of DHS and the Departments of Children and Families. The Arc of New Jersey has supported this legislation many times as it made its way through the Committee. The bill previously received unanimous approval in the Senate and now moves to Governor Chris Christie's desk for signature or veto.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE



The Arc of Illinois supported and Governor Bruce Rauner signed [SB 3106](#). The law previously allowed courts to admit testimony by alleged victims of sexual assault with moderate, severe, or profound intellectual disability not made in the presence of the accused. The bill expands the law to additionally allow such testimony by people with mild intellectual disability, developmental disabilities, or cognitive disabilities.

The Arc Maryland has been named as a partner with the [Ethan Saylor Alliance](#) for Self-Advocates as Educators. The alliance was formed as the result of a bill passed in response to the death of Ethan Saylor, a man with Down syndrome, at the hands of police officers. The goal of the Alliance is to recruit and train 15 self-advocates to work alongside law enforcement trainers in order to train police officers on proper interactions with people with I/DD. Read more details about the partnership [here](#). For more information about the self-advocate positions and to apply, visit [here](#).

DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS



NYSARC and other disability advocacy organizations held a rally in Schenectady, NY this summer to advocate for fair wages for direct support professionals (DSPs). State Assembly Member Angelo Santabarbara led the rally, which was attended by developmental disability agency leaders, local legislators, DSPs, self-advocates, and their families. The event was organized as part of the #bFair2DirectCare Coalition's "300 Days to Better Pay" campaign. Learn more about the campaign on NYSARC's [website](#). Follow the coalition on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner recently vetoed [SB 2931/ HB 5931](#) mandating a wage increase for DSPs. **The Arc of Illinois** has been very involved in advocating for this increase and supporting this bill. The "Care Campaign"

bill would have raised to \$15 per hour the wages for DSPs serving individuals with I/DD in residential and day programs supported by state funds or Medicaid by requiring the state to adjust reimbursement rates, and would have improved the collective bargaining rights of DSPs. Efforts are underway to attempt to override the veto.

The Arc of Minnesota, through its work with the [Best Life Alliance](#) in an effort called "Meet Minnesota DSPs," is gathering stories from DSPs, self-advocates, and family members throughout the state who are affected by the workforce crisis to educate policymakers on current workforce challenges for those supporting individuals with I/DD in order to motivate them to take action in 2017.

EDUCATION



The Arc of Illinois supported and Governor Bruce Rauner signed [SB 2137](#). This bill requires teacher institutes to include instruction on the Americans with Disabilities Act as it pertains to schools at least once every two years.

The Arc of New Jersey supported and Governor Christie signed [A2566/S496](#). This bill establishes a Response to Intervention (RTI) initiative in the Department of Education to support and encourage school districts in implementation of an RTI framework to identify students with disabilities, maximize student achievement, and reduce behavioral issues.

EMPLOYMENT



For National Disability Employment Awareness Month in October, Tennessee's Employment First Task Force, of which **The Arc of Tennessee** is a part, promoted a [#HireMyStrengths](#) campaign. The campaign, started by TennesseeWorks, places an emphasis on the individual strengths of people with and without disabilities.

Participants are asked to write their strengths on a [sign](#) and share a picture holding the sign on social media.

The Arc of New Jersey hosted a "[Watch Me Work](#)" series to commemorate National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Each week, they published a story of an individual with I/DD who is succeeding in competitive employment.

FINANCIAL SECURITY



The Arc of Illinois advocated for the passage of [HB 581](#), the Social Services Contract Notice Act, which requires state agencies to provide 30 days' notice to social service providers prior to reducing, eliminating, or suspending services. Additionally, it requires 120 days' advance notice to the General Assembly so that they have the opportunity to address harm that may be caused as a result of such actions. Governor Rauner recently issued an [amendatory veto](#) proposing changes that restrict the scope of the bill to only four departments that handle social services, limiting

its applicability to reductions, eliminations, or suspensions resulting from lapse in funding, and reducing the notice period for the General Assembly to 30 days.

As a result of **The Arc Michigan's** advocacy efforts, along with others in the disability community, the state of Michigan recently launched its ABLÉ program. Find out more about how to open an account [here](#).

HEALTH



The Arc of Illinois supported and Governor Rauner signed [HB 6213](#). This bill requires more frequent updates of managed care directories, clearer information about covered prescriptions, and a mechanism for reporting inaccurate information in said directories in order to give consumers timely and meaningful information and choice.

The Arc of New Jersey is supporting [S2476](#), which provides Medicaid coverage prevention and treatment of the Zika virus. Specifically, it covers prescribed mosquito repellents, family planning services, diagnostic services, targeted case management services, and rehabilitative services. The bill has passed the Senate Health Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee and has been referred to the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee.

TRANSPORTATION



The Arc of New Jersey supported [Assembly Bill 3432](#). This bill would establish a task force to study and make recommendations regarding the mobility and transportation needs of adults with autism. The Task

Force will, among other things, review current policies and recommend ways to alleviate current transportation barriers and obstacles. This bill was voted out of the Assembly Transportation and Independent Authorities Committee.

VOTING



The Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities, of which [The Arc Minnesota](#) is a part, hosted seven candidate forums throughout the month of October. These forums were designed to educate voters on their local candidate's viewpoints on issues affecting people with disabilities and their families, and to provide attendees with the information needed to vote.

The Arc of Indiana released a "[2016 Election Guide](#)." The Guide included a suggested questions for candidates, candidate statements, dates and deadlines, voter ID

information, early and absentee voting information, and instructions for addressing accessibility barriers.

The Arc of New Jersey released a "[Get Out the Vote 2016](#)" guide. It included vote by mail instructions, important dates, an explanation of rights, and a section where family members and self-advocates explain why they feel voting is important. Additionally, the chapter created a [website](#) with candidate questionnaires and additional voting resources.