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### **Governmental Affairs Update**

Sharon Levine, Director of Governmental Affairs & Communications

In October, The Arc of New Jersey supported a number of bills making their way through the legislative process. This included Assembly 926 which changes pejorative terminology referring to persons with certain disabilities or substance use disorders. The bill employs “person-first” language, to ensure that persons are referred to as having certain disabilities, rather than being defined by their disabilities. These proposed changes are in line with The Arc of New Jersey’s beliefs and our organization’s ongoing efforts to promote respectful language. The bill received unanimous support and was voted out of the Assembly Human Services Committee.

Additionally, we also supported Assembly Bill 3432 which would establish a task force to study and make recommendations about the mobility and support services 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.

Also in October, the Assembly voted in favor of A1449 which requires the Department of Human Services (DHS) to develop a timeline which individuals with I/DD and their families can reference as they apply for services as well as state and federal benefits. This timeline would be posted on the DHS web site as well as the Departments of Children and Families and Education. 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 the Governor’s desk for his signature or veto.