
Governmental Affairs Update – February

January brought us a New Year and also a new Governor, Lt. Governor and Legislative Session with a host of new representatives in Trenton. Phil Murphy and Sheila Oliver were sworn in as Governor and Lt. Governor and the Legislature began its 218th Session. Senate President Sweeney will continue to lead the Senate while the Assembly welcomed a new Speaker: Assemblyman Craig Coughlin. We are excited to work with the new Administration and Legislative Leaders on issues of importance to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Before leaving office, former Governor Christie signed three, high-priority pieces of legislation that impact people with I/DD. This included bills that will exempt community providers from paying certain motor vehicle fees, will limit the use of restraint techniques on students with disabilities, and will expand the background check process for staff who work with individuals with I/DD.

The Arc of New Jersey continues to advocate for increased wages for Direct Support Professionals in our role as Chair of the Coalition for a DSP Living Wage. As such, we were pleased to see the Coalition and the details of our FY19 campaign outlined in the Human and Children Services Transition Advisory Committee Report to the Governor. The report discusses the need to invest in the DSP workforce and we will continue to advocate on this important issue in the coming months.