

Governmental Affairs Update

The 218th Legislative Session ended last month and we are happy to report that Governor Murphy took action on a number of bills supported by The Arc of New Jersey which will impact people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. The Governor signed:

- S484/A2705 which revises the State's newborn screening program and establishes a Newborn Screening Advisory Review Committee which will be authorized to make recommendations on the disorders to be screened for by the Department of Health, as well as on screening technologies, treatment options, and educational and follow-up procedures, to be used in the State's newborn screening program.
- S4141/A6011, also known as "Paul's Law." Under "Paul's Law," the parents or guardians of the student with epilepsy or a seizure disorder can annually submit a seizure action plan to the school nurse. The board of education will coordinate the epilepsy and seizure disorder care at schools and ensure the training of all staff.
- S-939/A-3331 – Requires forms and materials for individuals with developmental disabilities to be available in languages other than English
- S-3468/A-5105 – Establishes Task Force on Maximizing Employment for People with Disabilities
- A-5314/S-3692 – Requires the Department of Human Services to study social isolation occurring in certain population groups
- A4608/S3099 – "Applied Behavior Analyst Licensing Act" - this bill provides for the regulation and licensing of applied behavior analysts

Also last month, The Arc of New Jersey was among a select group of invited guests who testified before the Senate Select Committee on NJ Transit. The hearing, spearheaded by Senate President Steve Sweeney, was convened in order to find ways to make NJ Transit services more accessible to people with disabilities. Executive Director Tom Baffuto told the Committee that people with I/DD must have accessible transportation in order to be independent and integrated members of the community. The Arcs of Camden and Mercer, as well as self-advocates from the New Jersey Statewide Self-Advocacy Network who depend on public transportation, also testified before the Committee.

Earlier in the month, The Arc of New Jersey attended Governor Murphy's State of the State Address where the Governor highlighted past accomplishments and outlined goals for the coming months.