
Governmental Affairs Update – January

During the month of December, The Arc of New Jersey testified at the State House in support of multiple bills impacting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Our organization supported legislation that would expand the background check procedure for staff employed by community providers. Our Executive Director spoke in favor of the bill when it went through the Assembly Human Services and Senate Budget Committees and it has since passed by the full Senate. In addition, The Arc of New Jersey supported legislation that would decrease the use of restraint techniques on students with disabilities. The bill was approved by the Assembly Health Committee and now awaits further action. Also in December, we supported a bill that would eliminate certain motor vehicle fees for non-profit organizations providing services to individuals with I/DD. This legislation passed in the Senate Transportation Committee and the Assembly Appropriations Committee. It now awaits further action.

On the federal front, Congress passed and the President signed, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. The Arc US and The Arc of New Jersey opposed this bill because of the serious threats the legislation poses for individuals with I/DD. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is likely to increase the country's deficit and in turn, cuts will need to be made elsewhere. This puts programs such as Medicaid at great risk. As Medicaid is the funding source for community-based services in New Jersey, we are concerned by the new law. Along with The Arc US, The Arc of New Jersey fought back hard against this bill and advocated our federal representatives to oppose it. We sent out action alerts, called congressional offices and our Executive Director authored letters to the editor outlining the dangers of the bill. In the end, only one member of New Jersey's 14-person congressional delegation voted yes on the legislation. To read The Arc's response to the legislation's passage, [click here](#). We thank everyone who participated in our action alerts and we will continue to provide updates on any threats to the programs that people with I/DD depend on.