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The month of March will be a very busy legislative time for The Arc of New Jersey. On the 5th, the New Jersey Self-Advocacy Network and The Arc of New Jersey were at the State House in Trenton to celebrate Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. This event was an opportunity to raise awareness about the issues impacting people with I/DD and gave self-advocates the chance to speak directly to our state's elected officials. Self-Advocates spoke with more than 35 legislators from both Houses, they received a proclamation from the new Department of Human Services Commissioner Carole Johnson and they were presented a resolution to celebrate this occasion from Assemblywoman Mila Jasey.

Also this month, Governor Phil Murphy will deliver his first Budget Address on Tuesday, March 13. Following the address, the Legislature will hold public hearing across the State to receive input and feedback on fiscal priorities from any and all individuals and organizations wishing to participate. The Arc of NJ plans to testify before the Senate and Assembly Budget Committees. Please keep a lookout in the weeks and months to come for action alerts outlining how you can help us advocate for funding in the FY19 Budget. Our advocacy campaign includes continued work to increase wages for the Direct Support Professional workforce, funding to move individuals off the Waiting List and the creation of additional housing vouchers so people with I/DD can live integrated lives in the community.

#### **Federal News:**

Unfortunately, the House recently voted on and passed HR 620 - the ADA Education and Reform Act of 2017 by a vote of 225-192. The bill prevents lawsuits over architectural barriers violating the Americans with Disabilities Act unless an individual provides "specific enough" notice and allows 120 days for a business to correct that barrier. This bill significantly diminishes the protections afforded to people with disabilities by the ADA and The Arc of New Jersey strongly opposes the bill. We voiced our opposition to our state's congressional representatives and we urge you to participate in any future action alerts that will help stop this bill from moving forward. The bill currently awaits further action by the US Senate. To read The Arc US Statement on HR 620, [click here](#).