



2026 POLICY & ADVOCACY KICK-OFF

January 29, 2026



Agenda

- Welcome
- 2026 Priorities
- What do we expect from Congress this year?
- 6 Ways to Take Action in 2026!
- Q&A

Welcome + 2026 Priorities



Together, we can make a difference.



Congress in 2026: What to Expect

What We Are Watching

Funding for disability programs

- DD Act programs
- Special Education
- Keeping an eye on housing



More Legislation We Are Following

We expect to continue to add bipartisan co-sponsors to a number of smaller initiatives including:

- SSI Savings Penalty Elimination Act (H.R. 2540, S. 1234)
- Eliminating the Marriage Penalty in SSI Act (H.R. 7055 S. 73)
- Recognizing the Role of Direct Support Professionals (H.R. 6137, S. 3211)
- Money Follows the Person Extension (expires 9/2027)
- Keeping All Students Safe Act (see Robyn's slides)

Medicaid + SNAP cuts move to states



Mitigating harm by influencing federal guidance and rule making



Tracking trends across states



Sharing state actions with federal lawmakers



Working with cohort of chapters (as we did in 2025) to share information and strategy



Build on lessons learned in 2025 to be more effective in 2026

Lessons Learned in 2025

- We can mobilize quickly
- Strong presence at the Disability Policy Seminar makes a difference (March 23-24, 2026)
- Hill meetings with national staff and chapters are powerful
- Sharing state specific data is valuable to state and local chapters
- Providing key takeaways from national studies and data helps get the information out to the network





Education

- Main issues we are watching
 - Move of IDEA out of ED to another agency
 - Rules for new federal voucher program
 - Congressional actions which could lead to IDEA changes
 - Keeping All Students Safe Act (KASSA)

Move of IDEA Out of ED

- November, 6 Interagency Agreements were signed moving offices out of the Department of Education
- OSERS (Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services) was not moved
 - OSERS contains 2 offices: Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and RSA (Rehabilitation Services Administration)
- Secretary McMahon has stated no offices or programs will remain at ED
 - Unclear if OSEP will be moved to HHS or DoL

Rules for New Federal Voucher Program

- New federal voucher program passed in Budget Reconciliation bill
- Will live in Dept of Treasury
- States need to opt-in
- Currently writing rules
- Anticipating an Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) later this year
- States Opted-In: AK, AL, AR, CO, FL, GA, IA, ID, IN, LA, MO, MS, MT, NC, ND, NE, NV, OH, OK, SC, SD, TN, TX, UT, VA, WV, WY
- States Opted-Out: HI, NM, OR, WI

Congressional Actions on IDEA

- Senator Cassidy, Chair of HELP committee leads the 21st Century Dyslexia Act
 - It amends (changes) IDEA
 - If this bill is marked up, many people can add amendments to change key pieces of IDEA
 - There is potential for a chaotic, unplanned mini-reauthorization of IDEA through this bill
 - He is up for re-election this year and is trying to get this bill passed



Keeping All Students Safe Act (KASSA)

- Bill would ban the use of seclusion and "deadly restraints", greatly limit physical restraint
- Has been reintroduced in the House and Senate
 - In the House has a Republican co-lead which has not happened in many years (Rep. Abe Hamadeh of Arizona)



**6 Ways to Get
Involved in
Advocacy in
2026**

1

Meet with Your Members of Congress + State Legislators

- Toolkit to reach out to members:
thearc.org/advocacytoolkits
- Reach out to everyone, especially Republican Members of Congress. They are in the majority.



CHAPTER CHALLENGE:

Meet with your members in January or February!

2 Use Resources From The Arc Don't Reinvent the Wheel

Toolkits

thearc.org/advocacytoolkits

- 2026 Medicaid (including *new* Medicaid work requirements in plain language and budget law explainer)
- Education
- Lawmaker outreach
- Storyteller
- More coming!



2 Use Resources From The Arc Don't Reinvent the Wheel



Defend Special Education.
Protect Students' Rights.

Sign the petition to protect the rights of students with disabilities.

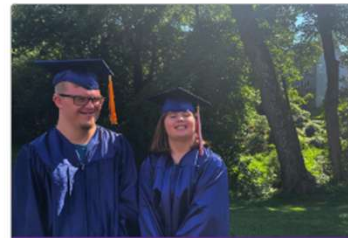
ACT NOW



Medicaid Saves Lives

Sign the petition to protect it!

ACT NOW



Share Why Public Education Matters To You

Share why public education is essential for students with disabilities.

SHARE STORY



Share What Medicaid Means To You

Share why Medicaid is critical for people with disabilities and their families.

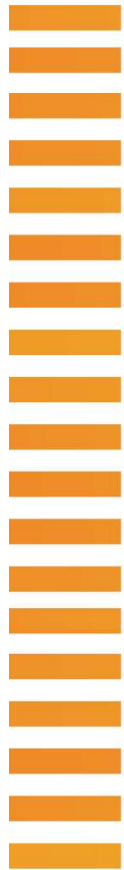
SHARE STORY

TheArc.org/action

New system this year – give us feedback please!

3

Make Your Voter & Candidate Education Plans



**YOUR
VOTE HAS
POWER**



Launching Spring 2026

- Chapter Vote Toolkit
- The Arc's Voter Resources
- Chapter Voting \$2,000 Grants
- Regular Chapter Meetings

4

Partner with Us & Build Advocacy Skills



Training:

- Federal policies and the latest from Washington
- How to Create and Share Advocacy Stories
- Digital Advocacy
- Story Databasing
- How to Support Self-Advocates
- How to Connect and Build Relationships with Lawmakers
- Power Mapping
- How to Get Started in Grassroots Advocacy

Sibling and self-advocates connections:

- National Council of Self-Advocates (meets monthly + Convention)
- National Sibling Council (meets quarterly + Convention)

5

Get Connected

- Sign up for Fusion & Grassroots Advocacy Updates
- Attend Events & Training
- Follow, share, uplift, subscribe, and tag us on social media



6

Attend the Disability Policy Seminar

disabilitypolicyseminar.org

March 23-24, 2026

NEW Online DPS Academy





Questions?

THANK YOU!

Find us at
thearc.org/staff