

Policy Profile

-Submitted by Hanni Raley, Assistant Executive Director-

The first session of the 72nd Colorado legislative session adjourned on May 3, 2019, and tallied many successes for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Due to the many hours of community and chapter testimony, advocacy and connecting with local legislators, Colorado should expect improvements in community living for people with IDD and their families. The Arc of Colorado has compiled a 2019 [Legislative Scorecard](#) which highlights how legislators across the state voted on issues that matter to the disability community.

Sourced from The Arc of Colorado's comprehensive scorecard:

Of the bills we supported during this legislative session, we chose to include the following: HB19-1194, HB19-1045, HB19-1223, SB19-222, and SB19-223. It is our mission to ensure that all people have moral and civil rights providing them with opportunities to live, work, play, learn and worship in communities where they choose to live. All people with intellectual and developmental disabilities have inherent value with individual strengths and abilities, are equal before the law, and must be treated with dignity and respect. The following bills most strongly supported our mission and policy agenda for the 2019 Colorado Legislative Session. Bill descriptions are not exhaustive. For full descriptions of each bill, please click on the bill number or visit: <http://leg.colorado.gov/bills>

- [HB19-1194](#): This bill, "School Discipline for Preschool through Second Grade," had four prime sponsors, Representatives Susan Lontine and Colin Larson, and Senators Kevin Priola and Rhonda Fields. This bill sets limitations on suspensions and expulsions for children in pre-school through the second grade in state-funded, community-based preschools, school districts, or charter schools. The bill also requires the State Board of Education to perform an annual review of data on suspensions and expulsions of students in preschool, kindergarten, first, and second grade.
- [HB19-1045](#): This bill, "Office of Public Guardianship Operation Conditions," had three prime sponsors, Senator Joanne Ginal and Representatives Marc Snyder and Matt Soper. The bill removes a previous condition requiring the commission

and director of the Office of Public Guardianship to wait to carry out certain duties until the cash fund has received \$1.7 in gifts, grants, and donations.

- [HB19-1223](#): This bill, "Social Security Disability Application Assistance," had three prime sponsors, Senator Faith Winter, and Representatives Dafna Michaelson Jenet and Colin Larson. The bill allows participating counties to fund staff to help individuals currently enrolled in the Colorado Aid to the Needy and Disabled Program to apply for Social Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance.
- [SB19-222](#): This bill, "Individuals At Risk of Institutionalization," had four prime sponsors, Senators Pete Lee and Tammy Story and Representatives Daneya Esgar and Lois Landgraf. The bill is an effort at prevention to help the state in the crisis of competency that we have recently seen. Among other things, it requires the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing to develop measurable outcomes to monitor efforts to prevent individuals on Medicaid from becoming part of the criminal justice system. It also requires the department to make a determination considering the addition of a possible waiver aimed at providing services for those with severe mental health problems.
- [SB19-223](#): This bill, "Actions Related to Competency to Proceed," had four prime sponsors, Senators Pete Lee and Robert "Bob" Gardner, and Representative Mike Weissman and Lois Landgraf. The bill clarifies and expedites various elements of the competency procedure that is enacted after the question of competency is raised for a particular defendant. The bill also directs the Department of Human Services to engage in multiple measures with the hopes of better tackling issues surrounding competency.

While The Arc of Colorado focused on five bills, a comprehensive list of bills that were tracked throughout the session can be found [HERE](#) and will be built upon in January 2020 when the next session starts. Stay tuned to The Arc of Aurora's *News You Can Use* for future policy updates!