

MEDICAID

Medicaid is a lifeline for most people with severe disabilities. It is overwhelmingly the largest funding source of both long term supports and health care for most of our constituents. State budget crises and actions by the federal government have caused many states to make drastic reductions in their Medicaid programs, creating devastating effects on people with disabilities, families and communities.

- Ensure that Medicaid fully meets the health and long term care needs of all eligible children and adults with disabilities.
- Oppose reductions or limits on federal spending for the Medicaid program that directly impact on recipients.
- Increase the wages and benefits of direct support workers in the community.
- Shift the major focus of Medicaid long term support services from institutional to community services.
- Expand the ability of consumers and families to exercise control over individualized Medicaid funding.
- Improve the home and community-based services option so that states will use it to serve more people in the community.
- Ensure that Medicaid-eligible children continue to receive appropriate health-related services during the school day.

LONG TERM SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

- Create a national, premium-based, non-means-tested, long term supports insurance program.



**DISABILITY
POLICY
COLLABORATION**

A Partnership of The Arc & United Cerebral Palsy

Disability Policy Collaboration

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An expanded version of this document is available on the Web site of each organization.

Legislative Goals for the 110th Congress

First Session

DISABILITY POLICY COLLABORATION



In Partnership With



American Network of Community Options and Resources



INTRODUCTION

The Arc of the United States, United Cerebral Palsy, AAIDD, ANCOR and AUCD are national organizations who serve and advocate for people with intellectual, developmental and related disabilities. We work together to shape, expand and protect a strong federal role that provides vital benefits, services and supports for our constituency. Despite being one of the wealthiest countries in the world, our nation is far from meeting the diverse needs of our constituents and their families, many of whom find their lives at stake as the federal role in disability policy is being addressed.

The First Session of the 110th Congress faces numerous disability policy challenges. This document conveys our positions on the top issues expected to be debated in this Congress.

Following are the critical and priority legislative goals of The Arc, United Cerebral Palsy, AAIDD, ANCOR and AUCD for the 110th Congress.

BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS

- Ensure that reconciliation instructions in the budget resolution do not restrict eligibility, services or benefits to vulnerable individuals in order to achieve a balanced budget.
- Enact sufficient funding to address the significant unmet needs of people with disabilities.

SOCIAL SECURITY

- Support plans to ensure the solvency of Social Security by making limited adjustments that spread the cost burden while preventing privatization or depleting the Social Security Trust Funds.
- Increase the Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) level to the level used for people who are blind, and substantially increase the resource limit for Supplemental Security Income and annually index it for inflation.

FAMILY SUPPORT

- Strengthen the capacity of states to assist families in maintaining typical lifestyles for themselves and their family member(s) with disabilities and address their unmet needs by establishing separate federal funding for family support.

REVENUE AND TAX POLICY

- Assure federal revenues necessary to meet the vital human needs of people with disabilities.
- Assure that human needs are met before more tax cuts are adopted.
- Assure the continued viability of non-profit organizations.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

- Conduct oversight of the implementation of laws that address the needs of people with disabilities in emergency preparedness and response efforts, and pass additional legislation that will continue to meet their needs during and after disasters and emergencies.

HOUSING

- Create a national housing trust fund and increase funding for Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers, Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities and other Federal housing programs to increase the availability of affordable and accessible housing for people with disabilities.

EMPLOYMENT

- Improve employment related services to people with disabilities by reauthorizing of the Workforce Investment Act and the Rehabilitation Act and by increasing funding for these critical workforce development, supported employment and vocational rehabilitation programs.

QUALITY OF SERVICES

- Assure high quality services, supports and access in all federally funded programs serving our constituents.
- Require federal agencies to include families, people with disabilities and service providers in all aspects of development and assessment of quality.

TRANSPORTATION

- Support and expand accessible and affordable transportation options for people with disabilities.

DIRECT SUPPORT WORKERS

- Ensure that workers who provide direct supports to people with disabilities are paid living wages and benefits.
- Require states to address the low wages and reimbursement rates that contribute to the direct support worker shortage.
- Establish a program for forgiving tuition loans, and create more in-service training and other educational opportunities for direct support workers.

EDUCATION

- Fully fund each component of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- Amend the Higher Education Act to provide more opportunity for people with disabilities to access post-secondary education.
- Reauthorize the No Child Left Behind Act with emphasis on assuring that all students with disabilities are appropriately served and assessed under the law.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

- Adequately fund all of the provisions of the Assistive Technology Act of 2004, including State Grant Programs (including Alternative Financing Programs), Protection and Advocacy, National Technical Assistance and Research and Development.

DISABILITY RIGHTS

- Enact ADA restoration legislation and reject attempts to weaken any of the provisions in the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Conduct oversight of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 1992, and ensure that any new voting reform legislation provides equal and full access to voting systems and polling places for voters with disabilities.
- Preserve and enhance all civil rights legislation that pertains to people with disabilities and their families, and pass necessary new legislation to protect individuals from discrimination in areas such as the use of genetic information to deny employment or health insurance and the use of physical and chemical restraints and seclusion in all settings.

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

- Reauthorize and fully fund the Development Disabilities Act, and ensure that any expansion does not result in negative fiscal effects or program outcomes for the programs currently authorized under the Act.

HEALTH CARE

- Protect the individual entitlement to Medicare and Medicaid.
- Ensure that all of our constituents have accessible, affordable and comprehensive high quality health care that addresses their physical and mental health needs.
- Expand training of health care providers to provide appropriate care to our constituents.