

The Arc of New Jersey Family Institute



For the families of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities



**For Immediate Action
Time Sensitive**

Action Alert

For Information Only

ACA Repeal Vote Expected Early Next Week - Call Your Senators TODAY!

As the disability community battled against this effort over the last several months, we have shown our strength, our power, and The Arc thanks each and every advocate who has stepped up in this fight. But it is not over yet - **we are expecting the Senate to vote on a bill to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA) next week.**

It is expected that the bill being voted on will be a new version of the [Better Care Reconciliation Act](#). This bill would pose a dire threat to Medicaid and the millions of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who rely on it.

Your Senators must hear from you about the importance of Medicaid in the lives of people with disabilities. Take a few minutes and call your Senator and tell them how Medicaid impacts your life. Every call counts and your calls are working!

This is the civil rights fight of our time, and we need advocates like you to remain vigilant to protect all that has been built to ensure the inclusion and equality of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in our society.

CALL NOW!

**Senator Cory Booker: (973) 639-8700
and
Senator Robert Menendez: (973) 645.3030**

What to say:

Use our simple tool now to call your Senators now and tell them:

- I am a member of The Arc.
- I am a person with I/DD (or a family member of someone with I/DD, or a professional in the disability field).
- I (or my family member) depend(s) on Medicaid long term supports (or home and community supports) to live in my/our community.
- Please **OPPOSE** any legislation that will cut or cap Medicaid.
- These types of cuts would be devastating to me/us and other people with disabilities and their families.



Proposed Medicaid cuts would have a devastating impact on people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. If your loved one:

- lives in a group home
- has the help of a job coach
- attends a day program
- receives respite services or
- behavioral supports

then MEDICAID MATTERS to YOU.

Did you know that special education is hugely reliant on Medicaid and that it helps pay for therapies (such as OT and PT), equipment and specialized transportation? If your child depends on those types of supports, then MEDICAID MATTERS to YOU.

These are just a few examples of the many, many things Medicaid

makes possible for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. That is why we need your help. Tell your representatives that **MEDICAID MATTERS to YOU.**

Your Advocacy Tool Belt

We know that calling your representatives may feel overwhelming. We want to help you feel more comfortable and confident in your advocacy role. Below are some resources to help. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us fap@arcnj.org.



Commonly Used Legislative Lingo

Appropriation: The money allocated if a bill becomes law.
Bill: A proposal to establish a new law, or to change, clarify or repeal an existing law.
Bi-partisanship: agreement or cooperation between political parties
Budget: The amount of money that is available for, required for, or assigned to a particular program.
Congressional District: One of 13 districts in New Jersey from which a representative is elected. The districts are established by state law and are redrawn following a census to maintain an equal population in each district.
Committee: A resident of a legislator's district.
Fiscal Year (FY): An accounting period of 12 months. In New Jersey State government, this period runs from July 1 to June 30. The Federal government's fiscal year is the period of October 1 to September 30.
Floor: The area of the legislative chamber occupied by the members and staff of the house. A legislator "has the floor" when he or she has been granted permission by the presiding officer to address the house.
Legislative District: One of the forty areas in New Jersey from which one senator and two General Assembly members are elected. Districts, many of which cross county lines, are established by a special Apportionment Commission and are equal in population.
Legislative Information and Bill Room (LIBR): A unit under the Director of Public Information of the Office of Legislative Services that supplies a variety of information about the Legislature to legislators and the public.

The Arc of New Jersey Family Institute 1985 Legislator Avenue, North Brunswick, NJ 08902 1702.246.2025
<http://www.thearcnj.org/familyinstituteandlegislators>

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Build a Relationship with Your Legislators

You are an expert! Every day you deal with issues as a family member of someone with an intellectual or developmental disability. Your representatives need to learn from you about what life is like as an end user. Government can help. The key to having your voice heard is to build a relationship with your representatives.

- 1. Know your legislators and their staff.**
 - If you haven't met them, set up a meeting or write a letter to introduce yourself. This is especially important if the legislator is newly elected and may not know the issue. Legislative schedules can be tricky, so be patient when trying to make an appointment.
- 2. The information you provide your legislators should be understandable, accurate, and user-friendly.**
 - Sharing personal stories about your family's experiences related to the issue is a great way to put a human face to a problem, show folks about services or programs don't assume your audience knows the jargon.
- 3. Don't be afraid to ask how they intend to vote on specific issues and why.**
 - If they do not intend to vote your way, continue to build your relationship and share information that may sway their opinion.
 - When legislators do support your position, give them credit. Send them letters of thanks and share them with the editor of your local newspaper, comment on their support publicly. You would hate for them to feel unappreciated the next time you asked for their help.
- 4. Work with a legislator's staff.**
 - Staff members conduct research, draft bills, make recommendations on amendments and develop expertise in areas in which their legislator cannot devote the time.
- 5. Attend town council meetings, school board meetings, rallies, and other forums that are open to the public.**
 - This will give you the opportunity to meet key people involved in the issues, keep up to date on developments related to the issues, and voice your opinion.

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TIPS FOR RESPONDING TO ACTION ALERTS When Calling Your Legislators

Have this information in front of you when you call so that you can access it if needed.

State that you are a constituent and calling about an issue or a Bill that is up for vote.

• Do not worry if you do not get to speak to the legislator directly, it is common for staff to answer calls.

Use People First Language when discussing your loved one.

• I.e. My sister Samantha has a developmental disability. NOT My developmentally disabled sister Samantha.

Make sure to give them your contact information so they can get back to you with information or to ask you follow up questions.

Clearly state what the issue is and what you are asking for. Try to stick to one or two issues.

Keep your message short and simple.

State why the issue matters to you and how it will affect your family.

• I.e. "My son has a developmental disability and this will directly affect our family's life. If more community based housing is not created, my son will have nowhere to go if something were to happen to my husband and I."

If you do not know the answer to a question, be honest. Let them know you will get back to them. Make sure to follow-up later with the answer.

Ask for a commitment.

• I.e. "Can I count on the Senator to vote *yes/no* on this issue?"

Always be polite and thank them for listening to your concerns.



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Tips for responding to action alerts when calling

Commonly Used Legislative Lingo

How to Build a Relationship with your Legislators

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