

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

URGENT: House Will Vote TODAY on Bill that Cuts Medicaid, Hurts People with Pre-Existing Conditions

The House is scheduled to vote **TODAY** on harmful cuts to Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act. Please call your representative in Congress as soon as possible and voice your opposition! We must stop proposed changes that will decimate the Medicaid program with an over \$800 billion cut and will repeal major parts of the ACA like getting rid of coverage protections for pre-existing conditions. Recent attempts to fix the repeal of protections for pre-existing conditions do not fix the fundamental flaws with the legislation. The fixes are not enough to protect individuals and families.

Take Action:

We must keep up our calls to Congressional offices. Even if you have called already, [call your Member of Congress again](#) and ask them to vote "no" on the American Health Care Act.

Here's what to say:

- I am a member of The Arc.
- I am a person with I/DD, or I am a family member of someone with

I/DD, or I am a professional in the disability field.

- Do NOT support the American Health Care Act, the bill to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA).
- Do NOT allow cuts to critical Medicaid services to pay for tax cuts.
- Do NOT allow states to opt out of requiring health plans to cover basic health care and keep it affordable for people with pre-existing conditions.

**CLICK HERE
to Take Action!**

By inputting your address, this web site will identify and provide phone numbers for your Representative in Congress and your two Senators.

For additional information, see [The Arc's fact sheet about Medicaid](#) .

How else can you help?

Share on Facebook and Twitter this video below about Calvin who has bilateral frontoparietal polymicrogyria and cerebral palsy, and who relies on the ACA for the supports and services he needs to grow and thrive. [Send the video](#) to your Member of Congress - [find yours here](#).



We appreciate all your calls and advocacy over

these past few months and we know we can count on you to keep fighting.

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.
Bipartisanship: agreement or cooperation of between political parties
Budget: The amount of money that is available for, required for, or assigned to a particular purpose.
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.
Constituent: A resident of a legislator's district.
Fiscal Year (FY): An accounting period of 12 months. In New Jersey State government, the 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): is 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.

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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 representative needs to learn from you about what the issues are and what government can help. The key to having your voice heard is to build a relationship with your representative.

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 persuasive.**
 - Drawing personal stories about your family's experiences related to the issue is a good way to put a human face to a problem, when talking about services or programs that your audience needs the most.
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, connect on an 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 agendas in which their legislators cannot deviate the limits.
5. **Attend issue council meetings, school board meetings, rallies, and other forums that are open to the public.**
 - This will give you the opportunity to be made included in the issue, meet up to state 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 key issue.

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 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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