



For Immediate Release
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The Arc Wisconsin Thanks Governor Walker; Hopes for Continued Bi-Partisan Commitment to Additional Improvements for People with Disabilities

Madison, WI - The Arc Wisconsin reacted to Governor Walker's 2018 State of the State address by applauding his significant support for people with disabilities over the last year, including ending waiting lists for children with disabilities, expanding Family Care and IRIS long-term care programs to all counties and championing employment initiatives.

"The Arc Wisconsin advocates for people with intellectual disabilities and their families statewide who care about these issues and are grateful to finally get the supports they need in their communities," says Lisa Pugh, Executive Director.

"Our organization has been a proponent for advancing employment opportunities for people with disabilities and the progress we have made would not have been possible without partnership with the Governor and with legislators on both sides of the aisle. We will continue this work and hope to have a first-of-its kind Employment First bill on the Governor's desk very soon."

The Arc Wisconsin requests continued bi-partisan commitment to other issues important to people with disabilities this year. Specifically, welfare reform proposals that impact FoodShare and other programs people with disabilities rely upon for basic needs must proceed carefully.

"Even exemptions for people with disabilities to enhanced requirements in these programs don't work very well. Research has found that disproportionately many people hurt by work requirements in these programs are in fact people with disabilities, those with chronic health conditions and caregivers. In addition, we need to make sure all people have the tools to get trained and the transportation to get to work."

The Arc Wisconsin also makes a plea for an investment in special education categorical funding that has not seen an increase in more than ten years. "Parents tell us quality is suffering and their kids with disabilities are not getting the education they deserve," says Pugh. "Special education teachers currently have the highest rate of emergency licenses in the state. That means students with the greatest needs are often taught by those with the least qualifications. This is unacceptable."

The Arc Wisconsin advocates for and serves people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD), including Down syndrome, autism, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders, cerebral palsy and other diagnoses. The Arc Wisconsin has 15 local chapters and is connected to a network of more than 650 chapters across the country promoting and protecting the human rights of people with I/DD and actively supporting their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes and without regard to diagnosis.

Editor's Note: The Arc is not an acronym; always refer to us as The Arc, not The ARC and never ARC. The Arc should be considered as a title or a phrase.