

ACTION ALERT!!

On February 14, 15, & 16, 2011 there will be a Disability Policy Seminar in Washington, DC sponsored by: The ARC; United Cerebral Palsy; American Association on Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities; Association of University Centers on Disabilities; National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities; and Self Advocates Becoming Empowered. There will be around 600 people attend this seminar and visiting our Congressmen!

These are advocates who oppose our HDCs on a national level!!

Below are the issues that affect our loved ones that we need to address with our Congressmen:

1) FACT SHEET ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ASSISTANCE AND BILL OF RIGHTS ACT (D. D. ACT)

Some of their recommendations under the heading of DD Act are:

The 112th Congress should work toward timely reauthorization of the DD Act that:

- *Increases the authorization for appropriations for all programs authorized under the DD Act;*
- *Protects and expands the authority of Protection and Advocacy Systems to investigate abuse, neglect, and deaths and to pursue class action litigation on behalf of our constituents wherever they live.*

OUR POSITION:

We urge Congress to adopt the following reform proposals aimed at assuring the DD Act program recipients carry out the Act's mandate to respect choice in residential settings and family decision making:

- a. Level fund DD Act program funding to give Congress time to review the programs and consider reforms.*
- b. Pass HR 1255 to require that federally funded organizations, including Protection & Advocacy Systems (P & As), notify residents of Medicaid-funded and certified ICFs/MR before a class action is filed, and provide a time limited opportunity for residents, or where one has been appointed, their legal guardians, to opt out of the lawsuit.*
- c. Secure an HHS audit of how all DD Act programs are working and whether they are respecting family choice and the Olmstead Supreme Court decision, to be submitted to relevant House and Senate committees within one year.*

- d. Limit the reauthorization to three years so that the Congress can more closely monitor the effectiveness of DD Act policy and DD Act program activity and how HHS is overseeing it.*

2) FACT SHEET ON HOUSING

Their fact sheet says “Being part of the community and living as independently as possible are among the most important values and goals shared by people with disabilities, their families, and advocates. People with developmental and related disabilities face a severe crisis in the availability of decent, safe, affordable, and accessible housing. Today many still live in large congregate facilities or other inappropriate places like institutions.”

One of their recommendations under the heading of Housing is:

- Provide \$30 million in funding for new Housing Choice Vouchers targeted to non-elderly people with disabilities who are institutionalized or at-risk of institutionalization.*

OUR POSITION:

We disagree with their FACT SHEET regarding the statement that large congregate facilities are inappropriate places to live. Any residential setting can be inappropriate if improperly administered. Arkansas’ Human Development Centers (HDCs) are some of the best in the world!! Yet, Arkansas’ P & A organization (Disability Rights Center) would like to see them closed down!!

OUR REQUEST TO YOU:

Contact your Congressmen and let them know that we do not hold these same positions on developmental disabilities as these groups. Tell them “Our Position” regarding these matters.

Here is the contact information for Utah's Congressmen (if you live in another state, please contact your Congressmen as well):

Senator Orrin Hatch - Phone: 202-224-5251 - Fax: 202-224-6331 - E-mail:
senator_hatch@hatch.senate.gov

Senator Mike Lee - Phone: 202-224-5444 - Fax: 202-228-1168 - E-mail:
mike_lee@lee.senate.gov

Representative Rob Bishop - Phone: 202-225-0453 - Fax: 202-225-5857 - To contact Representative Bishop via e-mail, please go to his web site at <http://robbishop.house.gov/Contact/> Down at the bottom of the page it says: To Email Congressman Bishop about a specific issue, please [click here](#).

Representative Jason Chaffetz - Phone: 202-225-7751 - Fax 202-225-5629 - To contact Representative Chaffetz via e-mail, please go to his web site at <http://chaffetz.house.gov/contact/email-me.shtml> and fill in your zip code and other information to send him information over the web site.

Representative Jim Matheson - Phone: 202-225-3011 - Fax 202-225-5638 - To contact Representative Matheson via e-mail, please go to his web site at <https://forms.house.gov/matheson/contact.shtml> About halfway down the page there are some questions asking for your name, etc. You then type in the information you want to give to Matheson and send it over the web site.

Please keep in mind that Senator Lee is a “new freshmen” and Representative Chaffetz hasn't been in Congress very long, and we need to have a strong voice in the very beginning regarding our position on these matters!!

Be diligent, and contact them as soon as possible – **BEFORE February 14th**.

Thank you so much,

Sherilyn Kent

MRAU Secretary