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Legal Advocacy

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Overview

Since 1950, The Arc has played a key role in establishing federal disability rights laws, such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Arc has also, throughout its history, fought tooth and nail to establish, expand, and maintain critical federal programs such as Medicaid, Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, and the Affordable Care Act. These laws and programs make community living possible for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), and litigation is a vital tool to ensure their promise is fully realized. Through its [Legal Advocacy Fund](#), The Arc participates in individual and systemic litigation and amicus (friend of the court) briefs in jurisdictions around the country to advance the rights of our constituents in all aspects of life, including community integration, fair housing, employment, education, criminal justice, parenting, self-determination, and more.



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Why It Matters

Through litigation, The Arc seeks to ensure that there is robust enforcement of disability and civil rights laws at all levels of state and federal courts, so that people with disabilities can live, work, and learn in the communities of their choice — free from discrimination. Individual lawsuits, system-change litigation, and amicus briefs provide opportunities to advance the rights of people with IDD nationwide in all aspects of life. Throughout its history, The Arc has been involved in seminal disability rights lawsuits leading to the enactment of the IDEA and paving the way for the deinstitutionalization movement. By working to enforce disability and civil rights laws, The Arc empowers the members of our community to not only fight against injustice, but to choose the lives they want and to live in a world that protects their civil rights and human dignity.



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What The Arc Is Doing

The Arc participates in litigation in jurisdictions throughout the country in multiple ways, including as counsel, as a party, and as amicus. The Arc’s litigation work covers a wide range of issues pertaining to the rights of people with IDD in all aspects of life for the purpose of advancing the principles embodied in our organizational mission and position statements to promote and protect the civil and human rights of people with IDD and actively support their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes.

Cases

[Learn more](#) about current and past cases The Arc is and has been involved in.

Amicus Briefs

[Learn more about The Arc's amicus work](#). Amicus briefs are submitted to the court by people and organizations who are not parties to the case itself, but who want to offer their expertise on the matters involved to assist the court in making a decision.



DC's OSSE Sued for Failure to Provide Safe and Reliable School Transportation

Parents and guardians of children with disabilities living in the District of Columbia, along with The Arc, filed a class action lawsuit against DC's Office of the State Superintendent for Education (OSSE) for failing to provide safe, reliable, and effective transportation to and from schools for children with disabilities, thereby denying students equal access to their education and unnecessarily segregating them from their peers. The Arc's co-counsel is the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights & Urban Affairs, the Children's Law Center, and McDermott Will & Emery.

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Find and connect with local resources and organizations.



VIEW OUR PUBLICATIONS

The Arc has contributed to several pieces related to disability legal advocacy.

Recent News



Comcast Grants \$1M to Transform The Arc's Data, Tech Training, and Spanish Educatio...



5 Disability Stories Journalists Should Be Covering Right Now (2024)



The Arc and United Health Foundation Launch \$2.5M Partnership to Tackle Mer

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Legal Advocacy Committee

The Arc's Legal Advocacy Committee is appointed by the President of our Board of Directors and serves as an advisory council to inform The Arc's expertise and help The Arc make decisions about litigation it participates in. Learn more about our current Committee members below.

- [Jasmine Harris](#) (Committee Chair) | Professor of Law | The University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School | Philadelphia, PA
- [Michael Breeskin](#) | Counsel, AdvocacyDenver Center for Special Education Law | Denver, CO
- [Natalie Chin](#) | Associate Professor of Clinical Law & Co-Director, Disability and Aging Justice Clinic | City University of New York School of Law | Long Island City, NY
- [Lia Sifuentes Davis](#) | Clinical Professor of Law and Director of Civil Rights Clinic, University of Texas at Austin School of Law | Austin, TX
- [Ernest Galvan](#) | Partner, Rosen Bien Galvan & Grunfeld LLP | San Francisco, CA
- [Lisa Greenman](#) | Attorney, Federal Death Penalty Resource Counsel | Washington, DC
- [Thomas Judd](#) | Attorney, Morrison Sund PLLC | Minneapolis, MN
- [Stacy Kray](#) | Partner | Orrick Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP | San Francisco, CA
- [Guha Krishnamurthi](#) | Associate Professor of Law, University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law | Baltimore, MD
- [Ruth Luckasson](#) | Chair, Department of Special Education, University of New Mexico College of Education | Albuquerque, NM
- [Lila Miller](#) | Partner, Relman Colfax PLLC | Washington, DC
- [Elizabeth Moran](#) | Executive Director, The Arc Colorado | Denver, CO
- [Jamelia Morgan](#) | Professor of Law | Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law | Chicago, IL
- [Katherine Perez](#) | Visiting Professor of Law & Director, Loyola Law School Coelho Center for Disability Law, Policy, & Innovation | Los Angeles, CA
- Lilith Siegel | Attorney | California
- [Torin Togut](#) | Attorney, Law Office of Torin D. Togut | Lawrenceville, GA

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The Arc promotes and protects the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively supports their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes.



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