



*For people with intellectual  
and developmental disabilities*

The Arc  
1825 K Street NW, Suite 1200  
Washington, DC 20006

T 202 534-3700  
F 202 534-3731  
[www.thearc.org](http://www.thearc.org)

September 16, 2019

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leaders McConnell, Schumer; Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy:

The Arc of the United States writes to support the Direct Creation, Advancement, and Retention of Employment Opportunity Act (Direct CARE Opportunity Act). This bill is an important step to address the workforce crisis that has real life impacts on direct care workers and the individuals with disabilities who they support.

The Arc is the largest national community-based organization advocating for and serving people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families. Advocating with and on behalf of more than 1 million people with I/DD and their family members, with over 600 state and local chapters nationwide, The Arc promotes and protects the human rights of people with I/DD and actively supports their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lives.

The Direct Care Opportunity Act would assist states to make strides to address the workforce crisis, making the lives of direct care workers, and people with disabilities better. The bill would award grants to at least 15 states and other entities for the recruitment, retention, and advancement of direct care workers. The grants are awarded for not less than 5 years, providing an opportunity for states to make real advancements in supporting the direct care workforce.

*Achieve with us.*

The Arc strongly supports the requirement that all efforts funded through the Act include an assessment of the wages or other compensation or benefits necessary to recruit and retain direct care workforce and a projection of wages needed to have a robust direct care workforce. This will provide valuable data to states and will assist in state-level efforts to raise wages for direct support professionals. The Arc also supports the requirement that funds will go directly to financial assistance for these workers, that will make an immediate impact.

The bill also highlights the important role for stakeholders at every phase of the process from project development, implementation and data collection.

Direct care workers, including direct support professionals, provide the supports for people with disabilities to live independently and participate in their communities. Workforce shortages, high turnover and low job satisfaction plague the field and the Direct CARE Opportunity Act would be an important tool for states to impact those systemic problems.

On behalf of people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities and the direct support professionals who support them, The Arc requests your support of the Direct Care Opportunity Act, and asks that you vote for the bill. For additional information or questions, feel free to contact me: [jorwic@thearc.org](mailto:jorwic@thearc.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'NJ', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Nicole T. Jorwic  
Senior Director of Public Policy, The Arc of the United States