

Dear Policy Watchers,

Welcome back from the summer recess! Congress returned this week after spending time in their home states gathering information from their constituents about what needs to be done in Washington. It seems pretty clear the legislators heard that people want a government that works, but it's easy to see a lot of partisan bickering going on leading up to the general election next year. Will that get in the way of important funding measures that the DD Councils rely on to do our important work?

Here's a few items of note this week.

Update on DD Council Appropriations: Since the House passed a favorable bill a few months ago, we were waiting for a final budget deal to move forward. We [got that deal](#) right before the summer recess when Congress and the President agreed to top line budget numbers that eliminated the automatic budget cuts known as "sequestration." Things were moving right along when we returned this week with a Senate subcommittee mark-up scheduled for September 10. Things crashed down the mark-up was [abruptly canceled](#) over disputes about "poison pill" abortion amendments and the president's border wall request (which is rumored to balloon to \$12B, with \$5B coming from "domestic programs" - a threat to all Labor HHS programs). It is looking more like a [continuing resolution](#) may happen before the September 30 deadline.

Immigrants with Disabilities Facing New Obstacles Take to the Courts and Congress. The NACDD Board and Public Policy Committee made the decision to join in an [amicus brief](#) to try to stop the "public charge" rule that would discriminate against immigrants with disabilities by categorizing health as a "heavily weighted negative factor" against them and expanding the forms of public aid that could disqualify immigrants from receiving green cards (including Medicaid).

Congress was also busy working on a different attack on immigrants with disabilities. This week, there was a [hearing](#) about administrative actions to deport people here to receive medical treatment. Congressmen first heard of this change in policy when 424 people, including seriously ill children and their caregivers, received letters from the government last month saying that they had 33 days to leave the country or risk deportation.

To learn more about this important public charge case, as well as *Texas v. United States* (concerning the constitutionality of the Affordable Care Act's (ACA) individual mandate penalty) that NACDD joined in 2018, please join NACDD's 3rd Quarterly Policy Call of 2019 on October 1, 2:00-3:00pm.

CALL-IN NUMBER: 800-832-0736

PASSCODE: 6261788

Misguided and Harmful Gun Violence Legislation: Several gun violence legislation proposals have an impact on the disability community because they are based on the false premise that

people with mental illness are predisposed to commit gun violence. There is no correlation between gun violence and mental illness. Scapegoating people with mental illness stigmatizes entire disability community. Therefore, NACDD will [oppose any legislation that links mental illness and gun violence](#).

Stay up to date on this issue and speak out when you hear politicians recommend [building more institutions](#) or [classifying students](#) with mental illness as “threats” because of their disability. According to [Tony Coelho](#), a former House Majority whip, and the primary author and sponsor of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), “Falsely equating white supremacy, hatred and gun violence with mental illness is harmful and wrong. Hatred is not a mental illness. Hatred is a learned behavior. Characterizing it as a mental illness may be politically convenient for some, but it will not stop mass shootings. It serves only to marginalize and fuel bias towards disabled people.”

Money Follows the Person (MFP). After months of [advocating](#) from disability rights groups, the Senate passed a bill that included a temporary extension of MFP and Spousal Impoverishment protections through December 31, 2019. Hill champions and advocacy groups are pushing for a permanent extension.

ACTION NEEDED: Help Pass the Autism CARES Act. This critical legislation reauthorizes the federal blueprint for Autism (ASD) research and programs, including the LEND program hosted by AUCD. While a 5-year reauthorization passed the House on July 24, the Senate has failed to act. Advocates are urged to call Senate switchboard to explain to their senators why the LEND act and other programs in the Autism CARES Act must be reauthorized before the September 30th sunset. Click [here](#) for the switchboard number and AUCD’s talking points.

ACTION NEEDED: Department of Education seeks feedback on postsecondary transition services to all students and youth with disabilities.

Do you have a story to tell about what works or doesn’t work in your community for youth with disabilities ages 14 to 24 seeking transition services? What sorts of tools and resources should the federal government be funding? How can we improve Parent Training and Information Centers? Now’s your chance to weigh in and make your voice heard.

The U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services is asking for feedback from parents, states, school districts, vocational rehabilitation providers and other stakeholders on how the agency can best use technical assistance to guide states on improving “postsecondary transition services to all students and youth with disabilities.”

To participate, click [here](#).

Feel free to share this update. And keep up the advocacy for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families!

Sincerely,

Erin Prangley
Director, Policy
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities