



*For people with intellectual  
and developmental disabilities*

The Arc

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Dear Senator Risch,

The Arc of the United States writes in strong support of the International Children with Disabilities Protection Act and urges your support of its inclusion in this year's National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). Last year, this bill was permitted to be attached to the NDAA and we hope we can gain your support again this year.

The Arc of the United States is the nation's largest organization serving individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and their families. The Arc has nearly 600 state and local chapters across the United States, including one in Boise. These chapters provide a wide range of services for people with IDD, including individual and systems advocacy, public education, family support, systems navigation, support coordination services, employment, housing, support groups, and recreation. The Arc chapters are committed to improving the lives of people with IDD and their families—both within the United States and around the globe.

According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), there are at least 240,000,000 children and youth with disabilities in the world, including approximately 53,000,000 children under age 5. Millions of children are placed in residential institutions and most of those children are left to grow up without the love, support, and guidance of a family. The vast majority of children placed in residential institutions have at least one living parent or have extended family, many of whom would keep their children if they had the support and legal protections necessary to do so.

Advocacy by people with disabilities and their families has been essential to reforming our own social service systems. Throughout the world, organizations of people with disabilities and family members are eager bring about change in their own society. A small investment to support and train advocacy groups will have a big impact to ensure that children with disabilities have the opportunity to live and grow up with their families – and transition to an independent life in the community. This bill is of great importance to a broad constituency of people with disabilities in the United States -- and the broader public who understand how important it is to protect families. We want to make sure that no family anywhere is forced to give up a child because of their disability.

We urge you to lend your support and push for this bill's inclusion in the NDAA. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions to Robyn Linscott ([linscott@thearc.org](mailto:linscott@thearc.org)). Thank you so much for your continued support.

Sincerely,

The Arc of the United States