



THE ELECTION AND YOU

THINKING ABOUT
DISABILITY

THE ELECTION & YOU: THINKING ABOUT DISABILITY

The election is coming soon!

Your vote helps choose which candidates will run our government.

They can help make laws and decide where government money gets spent.

That can make a big difference for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and their families.

There are lots of problems that people with IDD and their families face.

Candidates should think about how they can help fix these problems.

This guide has information on some important problems for people with disabilities in the United States.

Read this guide to learn more about these problems.

Then find out what candidates think.





Education: Keeping All Students Together



The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) gives rights to students with disabilities.

It says that students with disabilities have the right to go to school.

They have the right to be in school with students without disabilities.

Students with and without disabilities have to be in school together as much as possible.

They have to be in the same classes as much as possible.

Schools have to make sure students with disabilities get what they need to learn.



The IDEA became the law 45 years ago.

But many students with IDD are still kept separate from students without disabilities.

They get put in separate classrooms or in separate schools.

They might not get what they need to learn.



The IDEA says that is against the law.

The Arc made lawsuits against some schools.

Some recent lawsuits were in [West Virginia](#) and [Georgia](#).

These schools kept students with disabilities separate from everyone else.

They did not give students what they needed to learn.



Schools need help to make sure students with disabilities get the services and supports they need.

The IDEA said that the U.S. government would give schools money.

The government said it would pay schools 40% of the money they needed.

But, right now, the government only pays roughly 13% of the money.

That is not enough money for schools to help all students with disabilities.



Sometimes, students with disabilities are held down or put in a locked room or closet.

This is called restraint and seclusion.

Restraint and seclusion still get used in a lot of schools.

Many students with IDD have been hurt by restraint and seclusion.

Some have even died.

The U.S. government should tell schools to stop restraint and seclusion.



Working in the Community



Most people with IDD can work and want to work.

But most people with disabilities do not have jobs.

2 out of 3 people without disabilities have jobs.

But only 1 out of 5 people with disabilities have jobs.

Even when people with IDD get jobs, they might not get paid fairly.

They might get kept separate from workers without disabilities.



People with IDD should get real jobs for real pay.

They should be able to work together with people without disabilities.

They should get paid a fair wage for their work.

Real jobs for fair pay help people with IDD be a part of their community.

It helps them have the money to get what they need.



People with IDD should get the help they need to find and keep good jobs.

They should get help to make sure they are treated fairly at work.

The U.S. government and some businesses try to make jobs for people with disabilities.

But they usually do not give jobs to people with IDD.



Community Living: Medicaid Makes the Difference



People with IDD sometimes need help with their everyday lives.

They might need help with things like:

- Getting dressed
- Making food
- Going to work
- Keeping a job

When people have help with these things, this is called long-term supports and services (LTSS).



Getting LTSS can be hard.

Most people get LTSS paid for by Medicaid.

Both the U.S. and state governments pay for Medicaid.

But not everyone can get Medicaid LTSS.

Most people have to be very poor to get Medicaid.

It can be confusing to try and get Medicaid.

So, many people with disabilities don't have Medicaid.

They may have to wait for a long time for LTSS, even if they need them.

Over half of adults with IDD do not get help from the government.

Many must rely on their family for LTSS.

Sometimes, this means that family members must quit their jobs or take unpaid leave to provide LTSS.



People with disabilities want to live in their communities.

They do not want to live in institutions.

But Medicaid makes it hard to get LTSS in the community.

Medicaid will give LTSS to people who qualify and live in an institution.

But Medicaid will not always give people LTSS when they want to live in their own homes or in their community.

People may have to wait to get LTSS in their community.

Many have to go on a waiting list.

There are 690,000 people around the country stuck on waitlists.

Some people have been on waiting lists for 10 years.

They are still waiting to get LTSS in their communities.



Some people in the government want to save more money.

They want to spend less money on Medicaid.

So, they try to change how Medicaid gets paid for.

They want to pay for Medicaid with block grants or caps on the amount of money the U.S. government pays.

Block grants or caps means Medicaid would get less money.

Less people would get Medicaid LTSS.

More people would be put on waiting lists for LTSS.

And the workers who help people with disabilities would be paid less.

All these changes would make it harder for people to get the help they need.



Paid Leave and People With Disabilities



Paid leave is when you take time off work but still are paid.

There are lots of reasons why someone might need paid leave.

They might get sick.

They may need to take care of a family member who is sick.

Or they might have just had a baby.

Paid leave is very important.

People should not have to worry about money while taking care of themselves or their family.



1 in 4 people in the U.S. have a disability.

But most people do not think about disability when talking about paid leave.

So, paid leave programs may not work for people with disabilities.

Rules and laws about paid leave need to make sense for people with disabilities.

You can learn more by going to thearc.org/paidleave.



Social Security: Money to Live Good Lives



Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) helps people who are poor.

It gives them money to meet their needs and live on their own.

More than 71 million people get Social Security, SSI, or both.

Of these, around 12 million are people with disabilities under 65 years old.



People do not get a lot of money from SSI.

Most people get around \$550 per month.

But it is a big help for people with disabilities.

It helps them pay for the health care they need.

It helps pay for other costs that are part of having a disability.

It would be a big problem if the Social Security and SSI programs got less money.



Some parts of the SSI program make things harder for people with disabilities.

People can lose SSI if they make too much money.

Or they can lose SSI if they save too much money.

So, some people with disabilities do not work, even if they want to.

People can also lose SSI if they get married.

So, some people with disabilities do not get married, even if they want to.



The government could help make the SSI program better.

They could let people make more money while getting SSI.

They can let people save more money.

They can let people get married without losing SSI.