



MONDAY MORNING MEMO

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Welcome to the **Monday Morning Memo** featuring news of interest for members of The Arc and their families. Please send any comments to communications@thearc.org. You are welcome to reproduce and distribute items from the **Monday Morning Memo** of The Arc of the United States.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Why we want to build a massive database of supporters in 2009!**
- **DPC Legislative Goals for the 111th Congress**
- **Recommendations for Case Management Software**
- **The Arc's Nationwide Car Donation Program**
- **News from The Arc of Virginia**
- **NASDDDS Policy Paper: Services & Supports for People with DD**
- **Monday Morning in Washington, DC**

Why we want to build a massive database of supporters in 2009!

During the 2008 election cycle issues of concern to people with disabilities and their families seemed to receive more air time than they have in recent years. This was, in part, a result of the fact that then candidate, now President-elect, Obama made a point of reaching out to the disability community and published on his campaign website specific policy proposals that he committed to pursue if elected. Attention to our community was also heightened by the entrance of Vice-Presidential candidate, Sarah Palin, into the race and the related news

coverage of her youngest child, Trig.

While pleased with the coverage our issues received, we certainly can't take for granted that this will translate into concrete advancements on behalf of people with disabilities. Nor, for that matter, should we assume that our issues will receive a similar level of attention and coverage in future national, state or local elections. Rather, we need to establish The Arc as a more formidable political force in the future.

Yes, I know you will say "wait a minute, we're charities and can't engage in politics." But that's not really accurate. A 501(c)(3) tax-exempt entity is only prohibited from engaging in "partisan" political activity; there is a lot that we can do that will help elected leaders, and future candidates understand that we have a constituency they need to attend to.

The starting point is building a substantial network of supporters. We need to demonstrate that people with disabilities, their family members, colleagues and friends both register and vote in significant numbers, that their votes are influenced by the candidates positions on issues we care about and that, as individuals, we're active as political donors as well. As the Obama campaign has well illustrated, we need to use all available technologies to connect people that share our values and concerns.

Our datafile of approximately 130,000 members and 2,000 or so chapter leaders only begins to scratch the surface. What about our 75,000 or so employees, our 15-20,000 board members, our countless volunteers and donors, business partners and more? History has long demonstrated that there is power in numbers. But are we effectively making use of the power that is at our disposal?

The 2008 National Stakeholder Survey indicated that a higher percentage of our chapters are still relying on regular mail (55%) for "mass communication" as compared to email (43%). Seventy-five percent (75%) of chapters reported that their "mass communication" was limited to lists of 1,000 or fewer people (59% reported lists of 500 or fewer people); only 7% reported having the capability of communicating with 5,000 people or more.

In 2009, The Arc - at all levels - needs to take new steps to organize our small "p" political force.

For now, we would love to hear what you are doing at the state and local level to increase your power to influence change. Love to hear from you by email to berns@thearc.org.

Peter