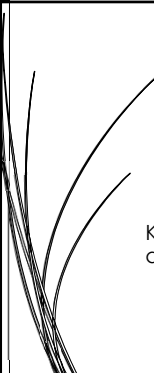




**Advocacy –
An essential part of a
special needs practice.
Now more than ever.**

Frederick M. Misilo, Esq.
Fletcher Tilton PC

1



NOTICE/WARNING

This presentation contains images and statements that some might find disturbing or inappropriate.

Kindly consider the historical context and educational relevance of these images and statements.

2



A Life of Dignity, Meaning, and Purpose Requires Advocacy

- Early intervention services
- Free appropriate public education
- Protection, promotion, and enforcement of civil rights
- Community based residential supports and services
- Meaningful work and community engagement with necessary support
- Access to affordable and quality health care
- Income maintenance benefits
- Voting rights reform
- Protection from abuse and neglect
- Self determination and supported decision-making

3

Current Landscape

The political climate threatens the safety net created over the past 70 years.

These are not right/left issues. They are right/wrong issues.

Policy decisions have real life consequences.

4

The Achievements in Disability Policy didn't just happen.

They were fought for, not given.

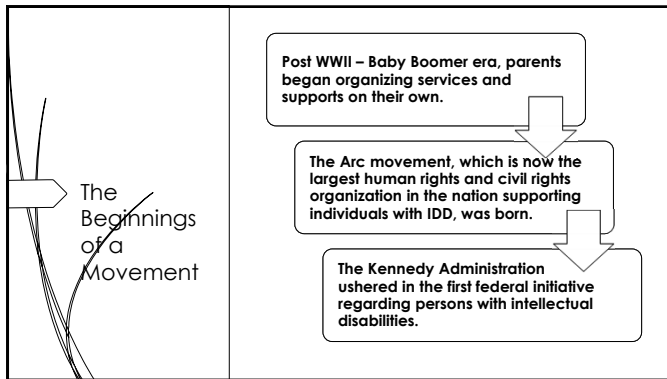
Let's review this together, and take a step back in time...

5

In the beginning...

- **Institutional model of care** – policy based on flawed views of worth of people with disabilities and other members of society viewed as “less than”
- **Eugenics philosophy** – 60,000 individuals are estimated to have been involuntarily sterilized between 1907-1970s
- **Non-therapeutic human experimentation**

6



7

Federal Recognition of Intellectual Disability

- Family Driven – Eunice Kennedy Shriver
- Amendment to Social Security Act to Promote Maternal Health and Planning Initiatives
- President's Commission on Intellectual Disability
- Thought Leadership



8

Institutional Reform – Stopping Human Warehousing

- The Last Disgrace - Geraldo Rivera
- Christmas In Purgatory – Burton Blatt – newspaper articles – political reaction – public revulsion
- Federal Class Action Suits
- Development of community-based services and supports



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**Notable
Landmark
Legislative
Protections**

**BIPARTISAN
PARTNERSHIPS**

- Rehabilitation Act of 1973 – Nixon
- Supplemental Security Income Act (1974) – Nixon
- Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (1975) – Ford
- Developmental Disability Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act) (1975) – Ford
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (1988) – Bush
- OBRA '93 (1993) – Clinton
- The Affordable Care Act (ACA) (2010) – Obama

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**Disability Advocacy
Superpower!**

**Collaboration and
Persistence**

- Consortium for Constituents with Disabilities
- Multiple organizations working as a broad-based coalition
- Grass roots network providing information to develop policy
- Real time alerts – calls to action
- Legal advocacy – amicus briefs



11

The Arc of the United States



Leads collaboration with other disability rights groups

Public policy advocate for over 70 years

Legal advocacy

Position Statements

Disability Policy Seminar

Over 600 state and local chapters

Services to individuals and their families in all stages of life

12



Individual Advocacy Strategies

- Equitable versus Equal SNT Funding
- Trustee Team Development
- State Appellate Appeal Practice
- Insurance Protection for Family Care Provider
- Family Partnerships
- Home Ownership
- Protection from Exploitation
- Awareness of Social Isolation and Loneliness

13



Systemic Advocacy Strategies

- Become a Member of The Arc
- Stay Informed!
- Attend the Disability Policy Seminar in 2026
- Hold Informational Events with Advocacy Organizations
- Support NAELA'S Policy Agenda
- Meet with Your State and Federal Representatives

14

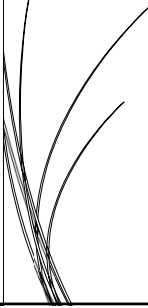



The Arc is fighting to protect disability rights, and the services people need to thrive in school, access quality health care, work, and live independently in their communities. **Please consider donating today to help continue this fight.** Your gift helps protect critical funding and advocate for lasting change.



Scan QR code to donate today

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Thank you

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