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The Arc: People with disabilities see promising initiatives; remaining needs in budget proposal

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Madison, WI – People with disabilities and Arc Wisconsin members across the state will be working to preserve key investments in Governor Walker's budget proposal as the bill now moves through the legislature. Specifically, the Governor's bill includes several items The Arc Wisconsin has requested to improve the lives of people with disabilities including:

- funding for thousands of children with significant disabilities
- key investments in employment supports for youth with disabilities
- essential mental health supports for children in schools
- Increases in personal care rates to support direct care workers in the community
- Increases in specialized transportation funding.

Arc Wisconsin members are particularly thankful that the years-long wait for children with disabilities and their families in the long-term support system could soon be over. Families use long-term support funding to pay for things like respite care, help for their child to participate in community activities, accommodations to make their homes more accessible and other supports that often help parents keep their employment.

Arc Wisconsin members will also continue to advocate for additional funding to support the direct care workforce so that workers in community settings can be paid a decent wage. Investing in a quality community workforce improves the

health of individuals with disabilities who then can stay living in their own homes rather than moving to more costly institutional settings or nursing homes.

Increases in per pupil funding in Wisconsin schools will be extremely helpful to students with disabilities in addition to the nearly $8 million proposed investment in employment supports for youth. However, The Arc Wisconsin urges legislators to address the decade-long erosion of special education funding that is impacting the quality of education for Wisconsin students with disabilities.

The Arc Wisconsin thanks Governor Walker for his support of people with disabilities in this budget proposal. We look forward to passage of these initiatives.

The Arc Wisconsin advocates for and serves people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD), including Down syndrome, autism, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders, cerebral palsy and other diagnoses. The Arc Wisconsin has 15 local chapters and is connected to a network of more than 650 chapters across the country promoting and protecting the human rights of people with I/DD and actively supporting their full inclusion and participation in the community.