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The Arc of Pennsylvania is affiliated with The Arc of the United States and 36 local chapters of The Arc across PA.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Arc Advocates Join Governor for Signing of New Law Removing “Retarded” From State Terminology

HARRISBURG, PA
December 20, 2011

The Arc of Pennsylvania and The Arc of Chester County were pleased to join other advocacy organizations at Governor Corbett’s ceremonial signing of Act 105 of 2011, which updates and modernizes state government terminology, replacing “mental retardation” with “intellectual disability.” The update in terminology is important as “retarded” has become an insult and affects how people with intellectual disabilities are viewed by others.

Change was spurred by self advocates from The Arc of Chester County who attended The Arc of the United States 2009 convention and learned of a pledge to end the use of the word “retarded” (www.r-word.org), which they then took to Senator Andrew Dinniman (D-Chester). After signing the pledge, Senator Dinniman took the next step and introduced SB458 amending the Mental Health and Mental Retardation Act of 1966, in order to make the changes in Pennsylvania.

The state action closely follows recent federal changes. On October 6, 2010, President Obama signed Rosa’s Law which addresses the references in federal law. According to The Arc of the United States, “the term 'mental retardation' remains the terminology used in the medical field and referenced in many state laws.” The Arc of PA will continue to work with legislators to update the language in other state policies and regulations.

The Arc of PA and The Arc of Chester County applaud Senator Dinniman for his efforts and thank Governor Corbett for showing respect to the individuals behind this action by including them in a ceremonial signing of the bill yesterday.

Formed in 1949, The Arc of Pennsylvania is the state’s largest advocacy organization for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. The Arc’s mission is to work to include all children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in every community.

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