

It is Time for Action

As we have all watched the news across the country over the past several weeks, the social injustice that continues to take place in our country can no longer be denied. It is wrong, it is heart breaking, it is frustrating, and it is terrifying. For anyone in America to live in fear because of the color of their skin, their religious beliefs, their sexual orientation, or their disability, is disgraceful and it is time for our policy leaders to take action.

The Arc of Indiana was started in 1956 by families who demanded more for their children born with an intellectual or developmental disability. They refused to lock their children away in institutions and instead chose to raise them at home, along with their siblings and neighbors. For the past 64 years, The Arc has fought for social justice – for the rights of people with I/DD to be afforded the same opportunities as those without disabilities.

Disability rights and racial equity are inextricably intertwined. Consider these examples:

- Labor force participation is lower for Black people with disabilities (17.7%) compared to those who are white (21%)
- Black children with disabilities lose more days of instruction from school suspension (121 days/100 students), compared to white students with disabilities (43 days/100 students)
- 25% of Black students with disabilities never graduate high school, compared to 16% of non-Hispanic white students
- The cumulative probability of arrest by age 28 is 55.17 for Black individuals with disabilities, compared to 39.7 for white individuals with disabilities

These are only a few of the racial disparities that exist in the disability community. Standing up in support of people's rights, and against hate and discrimination in its many different forms, is part of what disability rights are all about.

To those organizations who are leading this movement, thank you. Please know that The Arc of Indiana supports you and stands ready to assist in any way we can. We have history in this area and there is power in numbers. We are ready to make change happen with you.

To our policy leaders – at all levels of government – it is time for you to take notice, move beyond words and take action. Our communities, our state and our country need you to take the lead.

The time is now. Work with us. Let us take action together and together we can make change.