

National Down Syndrome Congress

Congressional Public Policy Agenda for the 118th Congress (2023-2025)

Plain Language Version

The National Down Syndrome Congress (NDSC) is the country's oldest national organization for people with Down syndrome, their families, and the professionals who work with them. The goal of the NDSC's policy agenda is to help people with Down Syndrome live independently, make their own decisions, and receive support they need.

Our public policy agenda for the 118th Congress is as follows:

EDUCATION:

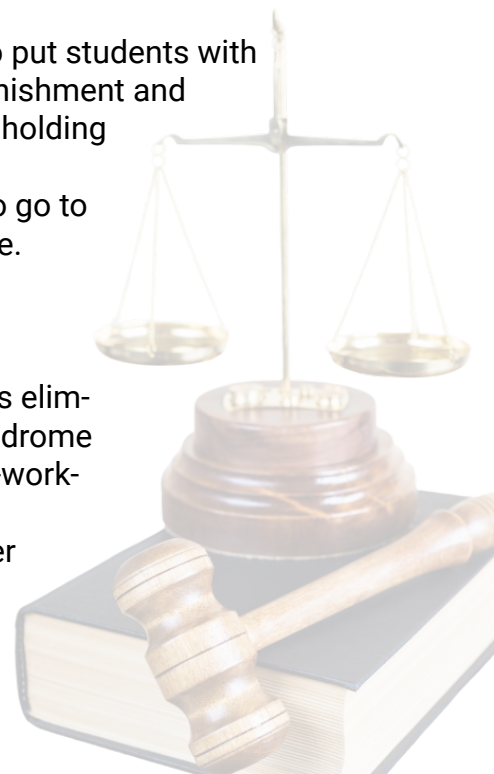
- NDSC believes that schools must support people with Down syndrome to achieve their full potential.
- The main priority for the NDSC includes increasing money for the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). ESEA and IDEA are the major government laws for education.
- Some parts of ESEA provide money for public schools with high numbers of children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards. This funding also helps improve teachers, principals, and other school leaders. In addition, states are supposed to use ESEA funding to make sure certain groups of students, including students with disabilities, do well academically.
- IDEA provides money to help educate students with disabilities in schools. This money is used for the supports and services the students need to be successful.
- Congress should also tell schools to stop allowing schools to put students with disabilities in separate areas for long periods of time as a punishment and to stop holding students when they do not want to be held or holding them in ways that threaten their life.
- Congress should make it easy for students with disabilities to go to college without having to prove their disability again in college.

EMPLOYMENT:

- Congress should eliminate subminimum wages, which means eliminating bosses/employers from paying people with Down syndrome or other disabilities a lower dollar amount than their other co-workers.
- Increase opportunities for those with Down syndrome or other



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disabilities to have more job opportunities across a wide range of industries or types of work.

MEDICAID AND LONG-TERM SERVICES AND SUPPORTS:

- Medicaid is a joint federal and state program that gives health coverage (insurance) and other services to some people with limited income (money). Many people with Down syndrome and disabilities use Medicaid.
- Increase access for all people with Down syndrome and disabilities to receive Medicaid benefits.
- Increase access to community life with others through Medicaid programs.

SOCIAL SECURITY:

- Congress should make sure that people with Down syndrome have access to Social Security Income (SSI), which is money people with Down syndrome can get if they are low-income.
- Congress should make sure that people with Down Syndrome have access to Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), which is money people with Down syndrome can get if they have worked before or if their parent has received SSDI.

CIVIL RIGHTS AND RACIAL EQUITY:

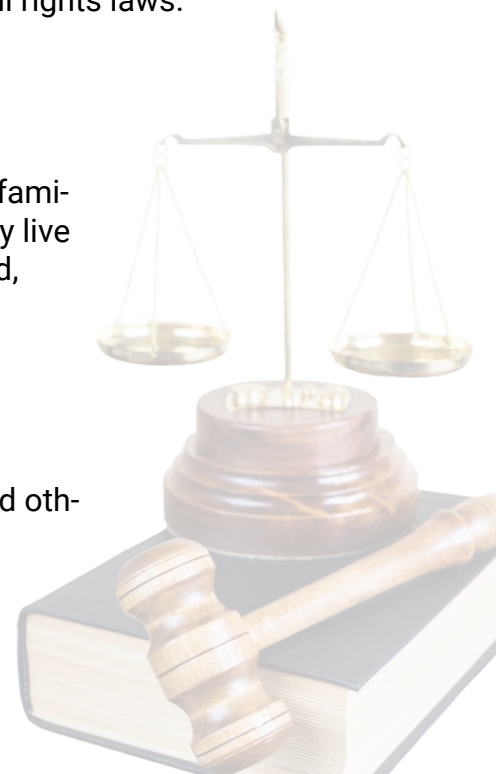
- Civil rights for every person means that regardless of gender, sexual orientation, skin color, religion, nationality, age, disability, or religion, a person should not be treated differently.
- People with Down syndrome are entitled to equal rights, freedom from being treated differently, and full participation as guaranteed by civil rights laws.
- Congress should not try and take away any civil rights.

FAMILY SUPPORT:

- Congress should help people with Down syndrome and their families to receive financial (money) assistance (help) so that they live without worrying about losing access to basic needs like food, housing, and clothing.

HEALTHCARE:

- Congress should ensure that people with Down syndrome and oth-



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er disabilities have access to health care if they get sick or need to see a doctor.

HOUSING:

- People with Down syndrome have a right to live in their own homes in the community.
- Congress should make sure that people with Down syndrome can rent or buy their own home.

RESEARCH:

- Congress should increase funding (money) for research and scientific studies to improve the quality of life of all people with Down syndrome and help them achieve their full potential.
- Increasing research will also require increasing the participation of people with Down syndrome, particularly people of color who have Down syndrome, in research studies.

Transportation:

- Congress should make it easier for people with Down syndrome to travel from place to place by creating more travel options so they more easily go to and from work and to other places of their choosing.

Please direct all question and/or comments to Cyrus Huncharek, NDSC Policy & Advocacy Director at cyrus@ndsccenter.org

