

State Advocacy Case Study: Arizona's Supported Decision-Making Law

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July 26, 2024



Supported Decision-Making

- Alternative to Legal Guardianship (either Full or Limited)
- Preserves rights of persons with disability – enables him/her to maintain decision-making authority
- Structure includes support team of key individuals
 - Assist with decision-making processes
 - Provide support dealing with & growing from results, whether positive or negative

Supported Decision-Making

- Legislation passed in 22 states & DC
- Very little familiarity in Arizona; not protected by AZ statute
- Pilot project starting in 2018
 - The Arc of Arizona
 - Arizona Center for Disability Law
 - Southwest Institute for Families & Children
- Legislation introduced in 2020, 2021, 2022 & 2023

Arizona SDM Legislation

- Collaborated with disability partners to develop bill
- Introduced in the AZ Legislature
- Educated lawmakers and state agency leaders
- Encouraged advocacy among various stakeholder communities
- Bills introduced in 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023

Arizona SDM Legislation

- 2020: House Bill 2769 – victim of COVID
- 2021: House Bill 2538 – passed House of Representatives 59-0; failed in Senate 15-14
- 2022: Bill introduced but not heard
- 2023: Re-introduced; not heard

But the story didn't end there...

Arizona SDM Legislation

There's always the Strike-Everything Amendment

- In a last-minute political maneuver...
 - SB 1291 (2023)
 - Probate reform and SDM

Creating A Supported Decision-Making Reality - Together

- Key lessons learned:
 - Broad coalition of advocates is essential
 - Find your champions early
 - Educate, educate, educate
 - Play the long game – persistence pays off
 - Sometimes it's better to be lucky than good

Creating A Supported Decision-Making Reality - Together

- Next steps:
 - Continue educating communities and stakeholders
 - Increase awareness of SDM & other alternatives
 - Expand adoption & utilization of SDM statewide

Questions?

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