



*Trumbull County Board of Mental Retardation
and Developmental Disabilities*

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*Douglas A. Burkhardt, Ph.D.
Superintendent*

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To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this letter of reference in favor of Charles Arndt. I feel confident of my credentials to write on behalf of Mr. Arndt for the following reasons:

1. I have know Mr. Arndt both professionally and personally for more than two decades.
2. My career has given me the opportunity, over the years, to co-labor with and evaluate manifold leaders in the field of disabilities, at both the state and national level. Therefore, I am able to rate Charles in comparison.
3. I believe I have the education, experience, and age-developed wisdom to evaluate both the heart and mind of leadership.

This letter of reference cannot be brief, unfortunately. Please understand that no matter the volume of words written, some positive thoughts will inevitably escape this letter.

In Ohio, there exist eighty-eight counties. In each county, there exists a board of mental retardation and developmental disabilities. At the state level, there is a Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities.

Twenty or more years ago, I was the superintendent of one of those eighty-eight counties, and Charles was the superintendent in another county. At that time, there was a "divide and conquer" attitude at the state-level Department. Each county was on their own in dealing with the Department. Mr. Arndt had the vision to develop a statewide organization to organize, represent, and advocate for the eighty-eight counties. That organization began because Charles drove all over Ohio, one county at a time, and spoke to our boards on the merits of this vision. That is how I met Mr. Arndt.

My first impression of him was one of awe. "Where does this guy get his energy, his vision, his optimism, his gut level advocacy for those we serve and his positive attitude?" While I still don't know the answer to that question, my first impression remains my lasting impression. Mr. Arndt is energetic, a visionary, and unabashed optimist, a stalwart advocate, and STILL has a positive attitude.

I have personally observed Mr. Arndt meet with legislators, congressmen, parents, providers of services, governors, bureaucrats, recipients of services, employees, leaders, followers, and taxpayers over many, many years and countless meetings. I have watched him take the genesis of an idea to fruition of intense and complicated legislative reform on many occasions.

Mr. Arndt has a strong ability to untie conflicting bodies of interest for common causes. His list of accomplishments in the leadership arena could not occur without his extraordinary personal attributes. A few major accomplishments include the following:

1. Medicaid redesign, waiver refinancing.
2. Educational funding reforms.
3. Levy law allowing replacement levies.
4. Tax equity legislation.
5. Genesis of Supported Living Program.
6. Redefined Ohio's definition of "Developmental Disability".
7. Introduced laws on investigation and remediation of abuse and neglect of folks with disabilities.
8. Delegation of administration of medication to folks with disabilities.
9. Authorized employment contracts for Superintendents.
10. Introduced concept of Regional Councils of Government.
11. Ethics Councils.
12. Employee criminal background checks.
13. Expanded terms of office for Board members.

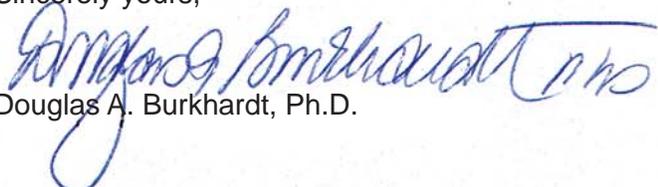
This is by no means an exhaustive list; but rather a highlight of major legislative enactments.

To summarize, I believe Mr. Arndt is without peer, certainly in Ohio, in terms of individual contribution to the field of mental retardation and developmental disabilities. I also believe that Charles is in the top 1% of professionals I have known in the area of cognitive skills.

I know of now current or historic figure in Ohio who has accomplished as much as Mr. Arndt on behalf of those we serve.

He would be a tremendous asset to any organization whose vision is to advance the lives and circumstances of citizens with disabilities.

Sincerely yours,


Douglas A. Burkhardt, Ph.D.