

RCW 44.04.280 State laws—Respectful language. (1) The legislature recognizes that language used in reference to individuals with disabilities shapes and reflects society's attitudes towards people with disabilities. Many of the terms currently used diminish the humanity and natural condition of having a disability. Certain terms are demeaning and create an invisible barrier to inclusion as equal community members. The legislature finds it necessary to clarify preferred language for new and revised laws by requiring the use of terminology that puts the person before the disability.

(2) (a) The code reviser is directed to avoid all references to: Disabled, developmentally disabled, mentally disabled, mentally ill, mentally retarded, handicapped, cripple, and crippled, in any new statute, memorial, or resolution, and to change such references in any existing statute, memorial, or resolution as sections including these references are otherwise amended by law.

(b) The code reviser is directed to replace terms referenced in (a) of this subsection as appropriate with the following revised terminology: "Individuals with disabilities," "individuals with developmental disabilities," "individuals with mental illness," and "individuals with intellectual disabilities."

(3) No statute, memorial, or resolution is invalid because it does not comply with this section.

(4) The replacement of outmoded terminology with more appropriate references may not be construed as changing the application of any provision of this code to any person. [2010 c 94 § 2; 2009 c 377 § 1; 2004 c 175 § 1.]

Purpose—2010 c 94: "The purpose of this act is to move toward fulfillment of the goals stated in RCW 44.04.280, to remove demeaning language from the Revised Code of Washington and to use respectful language when referring to individuals with disabilities. It is not the intent of the legislature to expand or contract the scope or application of any provision of this code. Nothing in this act may be construed to change the application of any provision of this code to any person." [2010 c 94 § 1.]