

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2390

As Passed House:
February 17, 2020

Title: An act relating to using respectful language regarding individuals with developmental disabilities.

Brief Description: Using respectful language.

Sponsors: Representatives Kilduff, Goodman, Klippert, Leavitt, Thai, Dufault, Macri, Senn and Hudgins.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Human Services & Early Learning: 1/22/20, 1/28/20 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/17/20, 98-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Amends several statutes to reflect respectful language as identified under current law by replacing references to "handicapped persons" with references to "individuals with disabilities."
- Amends some statutes referencing "the elderly" to instead reference "the aging."

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & EARLY LEARNING

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Senn, Chair; Callan, Vice Chair; Frame, Vice Chair; Dent, Ranking Minority Member; Eslick, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; McCaslin, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Corry, Goodman, Griffey, Kilduff, Klippert, Lovick and Ortiz-Self.

Staff: Nico Wedekind (786-7290) and Luke Wickham (786-7146).

Background:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The Office of the Code Reviser (Code Reviser) is directed to avoid all language referencing "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. The Code Reviser is directed to replace the above language with the following terminology: "individuals with disabilities," "individuals with developmental disabilities," "individuals with mental illness," and/or "individuals with intellectual disabilities."

No statute, memorial, or resolution is invalid because it includes disrespectful language listed above.

Summary of Bill:

Several statutes are amended to reflect the language deemed respectful by current law by changing:

- "chemical dependency" to "substance use disorder;"
- "children who are crippled" to "children with disabilities;"
- "disabled veteran" to "veterans with disabilities;"
- "the disadvantaged" to "disadvantaged individuals;"
- "elderly persons" to "persons who are aging;"
- "handicap(s)" to "disability" or "disabilities;"
- "handicapped" to "individual with disabilities" or "person with disabilities;"
- "less handicapped persons" to "persons with less acute disabilities;"
- "mentally ill or mentally handicapped" to "persons suffering from mental illness or persons with disabilities;"
- "non handicapped" to "persons without disabilities;" and
- "physical or mental handicap or emotional disturbance" to "disability or behavioral health conditions."

Language referencing decodified sections pertaining to a metropolitan public transportation system and benefit is removed.

References to recodified statutes are corrected.

Minor technical amendments are made.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Words do matter. It is extremely important that respectful language is used by legislators when talking about the individuals they represent. Over the years, many

respectful language bills have been passed; the momentum for using respectful language should continue, and it is important to clean up the language in statutes. Individuals with disabilities have had many abusive words used towards them. Every person should be treated with dignity and respect. Setting this standard starts with the language used in statutes to describe individuals. Further cleaning up language will hopefully lead to people with intellectual disabilities being treated more respectfully in their communities and their providers.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Kilduff, prime sponsor; Emily Rogers, Washington State Developmental Disabilities Council; Noah Seidel, Office of Developmental Disabilities Ombuds; and Ivanova Smith, Anthony Nash, and Robert Wardell, Self Advocates in Leadership.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.