



Home | Newsroom | Media | Administration | NJ's Priorities | Contact Us

Press Releases | Public Addresses | Executive Orders | Press Kit | Reports

Home > Newsroom > Press Releases > 2010 > Governor Christie Signs Legislation to Eliminate Demeaning Terms from State Laws and Regulations

Governor Christie Signs Legislation to Eliminate Demeaning Terms from State Laws and Regulations

Monday, August 16, 2010 • Tags: [Other](#)

Trenton, NJ - Governor Chris Christie today signed legislation that removes outdated, disrespectful terminology that refers to persons with developmental disabilities from all New Jersey statutes and regulations. The bill, S-1982, eliminates references such as "mental retardation," "mentally retarded" and "feeble-minded," replacing the terms with "intellectual disability" or "developmental disability." All future legislation will encompass these changes.

"We live in the 21st Century and our laws must reflect that distinction," said Governor Christie. "Those with intellectual disabilities are an important part of the fabric of New Jersey. Using antiquated, degrading terms to describe individuals with disabilities is an affront to the integrity of the person and their family, and below our common decency as a people. I am proud to move the language of New Jersey's laws and regulations beyond such terminology."

The legislation also updates and replaces references in Title 30 of the Revised Statutes to "mentally retarded" and "mental retardation" with the terms "developmentally disabled" and "developmental disability." These changes also reflect the fact that the Division of Developmental Disabilities in the Department of Human Services serves all persons with developmental disabilities.

"When it comes to New Jerseyans living with developmental disabilities, words matter," said Senate President Stephen M. Sweeney, sponsor of the bill. "The bill would replace demeaning, hurtful and antiquated terms for individuals with developmental disabilities to recognize that people are not defined by their disability, but by the character and strength they exhibit. Rather than marginalizing and demoralizing a segment of our population with the language used in our laws, we should strive to do better to educate the public about the accomplishments and contributions of people with developmental disabilities."

In addition, two inoperative statutes were repealed. One established the E.R. Johnstone Training and Research Center, which closed in 1992, and the other authorized the Commissioner of Institutions and Agencies to regulate hospitals and other health care facilities, a responsibility transferred to the Department of Health and Senior Services in 1971.

The legislation was sponsored by Senate President Stephen M. Sweeney (D-Salem, Cumberland and Gloucester) Senator Joseph. F. Vitale (D-Middlesex), Assemblywoman Valerie Vainieri Huttle (D-Bergen) as well as Assemblyman Thomas P. Giblin (D-Essex and Passaic), Assemblyman Albert Coutinho (D-Essex and Union), Assemblyman John J. Burzichelli (D-Salem, Cumberland and Gloucester) and Assemblyman Louis D. Greenwald (D-Camden).

###

Press Contact:
Michael Drewniak
609-777-2600

Stay Connected with Social Media



Stay Connected with Email Alerts

LIKE THIS PAGE? SHARE IT WITH YOUR FRIENDS.

