

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6241

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Health & Long-Term Care, February 4, 2004

Title: An act relating to use of respectful language in the Revised Code of Washington and the Washington Administrative Code.

Brief Description: Requiring use of respectful language in the Revised Code of Washington regarding individuals with disabilities.

Sponsors: Senators Regala, Deccio, Fraser, Thibaudeau, Kline, Kohl-Welles, McAuliffe, Winsley, Fairley, Eide and Haugen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 2/3/04, 2/4/04 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Deccio, Chair; Winsley, Vice Chair; Brandland, Franklin, Keiser, Parlette and Thibaudeau.

Staff: Rhoda Donkin (786-7198)

Background: The Revised Code of Washington and the Washington Administrative Code have language that is considered demeaning and ostracizing to people with disabilities. Such terms as handicapped, crippled, and retarded are in many sections of the codes, some dating back 100 years. There is widespread interest in changing these references to terminology that puts the person before the disability.

Summary of Bill: The Code Reviser is directed to replace current terminology with such terms as "individuals with disabilities," "individuals with mental illness," and "individuals with mental retardation." All agency orders creating new rules or amending existing rules will accordingly use this language.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: By changing the way that people are described, it is our hope that respectful language will be the norm for future generations.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Emily Rogers, Self Advocates in Leadership; Resa Hayes, People First of Washington (pro).