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SENATE BILL 6241

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State of Washington

58th Legislature

2004 Regular Session

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

Read first time 01/15/2004. Referred to Committee on Health & Long-Term Care.

1 AN ACT Relating to use of respectful language in the Revised Code  
2 of Washington and the Washington Administrative Code; adding a new  
3 section to chapter 44.04 RCW; and adding a new section to chapter 34.05  
4 RCW.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 44.04 RCW  
7 to read as follows:

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

17 (2)(a) The code reviser is directed to avoid all references to:  
18 Disabled, developmentally disabled, mentally disabled, mentally ill,  
19 mentally retarded, handicapped, cripple, and crippled, in any new

1 statute, memorial, or resolution, and to change such references in any  
2 existing statute, memorial, or resolution as sections including these  
3 references are otherwise amended by law.

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

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

11 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 34.05 RCW  
12 to read as follows:

13 (1) All agency orders creating new rules, or amending existing  
14 rules, shall be formulated in accordance with the requirements of  
15 section 1 of this act regarding the use of respectful language.

16 (2) No agency rule is invalid because it does not comply with this  
17 section.

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