
Human Services Committee

HJM 4024

Brief Description: Concerning a memorial petitioning for the elimination of the term "mentally retarded" in federal law.

Sponsors: Representatives Angel, Wallace, Haler and Moeller.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requests that the United States Congress pass a bill that requires the replacement of the terms "mental retardation" and "mentally retarded" in the federal health, education, and labor policy statutes; the terms would be replaced with "intellectual disability" and "individuals with an intellectual disability," respectively.

Hearing Date: 1/27/10

Staff: Linda Merelle (786-7092).

Background:

In 2004 the Legislature passed House Bill 2663 which required the Code Reviser to avoid references to certain words frequently used to describe individuals with disabilities. Some of the specific terms were: disabled, developmentally disabled, mentally disabled, mentally ill, mentally retarded, and handicapped.

These terms were directed to be avoided in future laws and to be replaced in existing statutes as those statutes were amended. The replacement terms were: individuals with disabilities, individuals with developmental disabilities, individuals with mental disabilities, individuals with mental illness, and individuals with mental retardation.

In 2009 the Legislature passed House Bill 1835 which directed the Code Reviser to replace the term "mental retardation" with "intellectual disability" in statutes, memorials, and resolutions.

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.

In November 2009 Senate Bill 2781 was introduced into the United States Senate and referred to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions. The bill currently remains in that committee. Senate Bill 2781 requires that the terms "mental retardation" and "mentally retarded" be replaced with the terms "intellectual disability" and "individuals with an intellectual disability" in the federal health, education, and labor policy statutes.

Summary of Bill:

This House Joint Memorial petitions the United States Congress to pass Senate Bill 2781 and the President of the United States to sign the legislation into law.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.