

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## HJM 4024

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Health & Long-Term Care, February 24, 2010

**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 History:** Passed House: 2/13/10, 94-1; 2/13/10, 95-0.

**Committee Activity:** Health & Long-Term Care: 2/24/10 [DP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Keiser, Chair; Pflug, Ranking Minority Member; Becker, Fairley and Parlette.

**Staff:** Rhoda Donkin (786-7465)

**Background:** In 2004 the Legislature passed House Bill 2663 directing 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 retarded, and handicapped. The Code Reviser was directed to avoid future use of these terms and as statutes with them were under consideration to replace them with other people first terminology.

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.

Currently, legislation is under consideration in Congress that replaces the terms mental retardation and mentally retarded in federal law with intellectual disability and individuals with an intellectual disability.

**Summary of Bill:** The 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.

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*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.*

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: This respectfully asks Congress not to use disrespectful language. Words hurt and people live with the pain of being treated disrespectfully all their lives. The DSM-4 (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual) is being revised and the revised edition has dropped the diagnosis of mentally retarded and replaced it with intellectual disability. This is what we want. We want to be recognized for who we are and what we do, not as a word that isn't who we are. We don't want to be victims of this word any longer.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative Angel, prime sponsor; Kyle Matheson, People First of Washington; Mike Raymond, Robert Warden, Self Advocates of Washington; Diana Stadden, ARC of Washington; Vicky Foster, ARC; Sarah McQueed, ARC of King County.