

1 H.399

2 Introduced by Representatives French of Randolph, Batchelor of Derby,
3 Christie of Hartford, Donahue of Northfield, Frank of Underhill,
4 Moran of Wardsboro and Pugh of South Burlington

5 Referred to Committee on

6 Date:

7 Subject: Executive; human services; respectful language study

8 Statement of purpose: This bill proposes to require the agency of human
9 services to conduct a study to analyze Vermont statutes referring to people
10 with disabilities and to make recommendations to use more respectful
11 language when referring to people with disabilities.

12 An act relating to respectful language in referring to people with disabilities

13 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

14 Sec. 1. RESPECTFUL LANGUAGE STUDY

15 (a) The agency of human services shall convene a working group to review
16 the terminology that is currently used in Vermont statutes to refer to people
17 with disabilities and to make recommendations to revise this terminology when
18 more respectful language could be used. The working group shall propose
19 guidelines for using respectful language when referring to people with

1 disabilities. In convening the working group, the agency shall invite the
2 participation of representatives of the Vermont coalition for disability rights,
3 Green Mountain self-advocates, and other interested parties. In preparing its
4 recommendations, the working group shall:

5 (1) identify words that should be replaced or removed from Vermont
6 statutes and suggest in their place words that reflect positive views of people
7 with disabilities;

8 (2) avoid using any language that changes the meaning or intent of the
9 statute;

10 (3) select wording that does not conflict with federal law; and

11 (4) develop guidelines to support state government agencies and
12 departments to use respectful language in all areas of conducting business.

13 (b) By November 1, 2011, the working group shall report to the house
14 committee on human services and the senate committee on health and welfare
15 the group's findings and recommendations, including any recommended
16 legislation to address its findings and recommendations.

17 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

18 This act shall take effect on passage.