

1 S.90

2 Introduced by Senator Pollina

3 Referred to Committee on Government Operations

4 Date: March 11, 2011

5 Subject: Executive; human services; respectful language study

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

10 An act relating to respectful language in state statutes in referring to people  
11 with disabilities

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

13 ~~Sec. 1. RESPECTFUL LANGUAGE STUDY~~

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

1 ~~Green Mountain self-advocates, and other interested parties. In preparing its~~  
2 ~~recommendations, the working group shall:~~

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

6 ~~(2) avoid using any language that changes the meaning or intent of the~~  
7 ~~statute;~~

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

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

11 ~~(b) By November 1, 2011, the working group shall report to the house~~  
12 ~~committee on government operations and the senate committee on government~~  
13 ~~operations the group's findings and recommendations, including any~~  
14 ~~recommended legislation to address its findings and recommendations.~~

15 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

16 ~~This act shall take effect on passage.~~

~~*Sec. 1. RESPECTFUL LANGUAGE STUDY*~~

~~*(a) The agency of human services shall convene a working group to propose guidelines for using respectful language when referring to people with disabilities. In convening the working group, the agency shall invite the participation of two representatives from the Vermont coalition for disability rights, two representatives from Green Mountain self-advocates, one representative from the Vermont center for independent living, one representative from Vermont psychiatric survivors, one representative from the human rights commission, and two people appointed by the governor, at least*~~

~~one of whom shall be a high school student. In preparing its recommendations, the working group shall:~~

~~(1) identify words that should not be used in Vermont statutes and suggest in their place words that reflect positive views of people with disabilities;~~

~~(2) avoid using any language that changes the meaning or intent of state statutes;~~

~~(3) identify specific statutes that should be addressed by the general assembly;~~

~~(4) select wording that does not conflict with federal law; and~~

~~(5) develop guidelines to support state government agencies and departments to use respectful language in all areas of conducting business.~~

~~(b) By November 1, 2011, the working group shall report to the house committee on government operations and the senate committee on government operations the group's findings and recommendations, including any recommended legislation to address its findings and recommendations.~~

~~Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE~~

~~This act shall take effect on passage.~~

Sec. 1. RESPECTFUL LANGUAGE STUDY

(a) The agency of human services shall convene a working group to recommend guidelines for using respectful language when referring to people with disabilities. In convening the working group, the agency shall designate at least one employee of the agency to serve on the working group and shall invite the participation of two representatives from the Vermont coalition for disability rights, two representatives from Green Mountain self-advocates, one representative from the Vermont center for independent living, one representative from Vermont psychiatric survivors, one representative from the human rights commission, one representative from the disability law project, one representative from disability rights Vermont, and two people appointed by the governor, at least one of whom shall be a high school student. The agency shall provide administrative services to the working group. In preparing its recommendations, the working group shall:

(1) identify words that should not be used in Vermont statutes, regulations, and policies and suggest in their place words that reflect positive views of people with disabilities;

(2) avoid using any language that changes the meaning or intent of state statutes;

(3) identify specific statutes that should be addressed by the general assembly;

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

(5) recommend guidelines to support state government agencies and departments to use respectful language.

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

*Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE*

*This act shall take effect on passage.*