

## S.27: An Act Relating to Respectful Language in the Vermont Statutes Annotated

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January 24, 2014

### *History:*

- 2011 Acts and Resolves No. 24 (An act relating to respectful language in state statutes in referring to people with disabilities)
- 2012 Joint Resolution No. 456 (Joint resolution relating to respectful language in the Vermont Statutes Annotated)

### *Principles from the Respectful Language Study:*

1. Use person-first language  
(e.g. use “person with a disability” versus “disabled person” and “persons who are elderly” versus “the elderly”)
2. Avoid words describing disability in the negative  
(e.g. do not use “suffering from,” “afflicted with,” or “victim of;” instead use “person having” or “person with”)
3. Avoid using “normal” to describe people without disabilities  
(e.g. use “typical students” or “students without disabilities” versus “normal students”)

### *Replacement Words for Frequently Used Terms:*

<i>Disrespectful Terms</i>	<i>Replacement Terms</i>
Aged	Persons who are elderly
Consumer/Customer	Person receiving/eligible for services
Defect	Disability
Developmentally Disabled	Person with a developmental disability
Disorder	Disease/Disability
Handicap	Disability
Hearing impaired	Persons who are deaf/hard of hearing
Impairment	Disability
Insane	Major psychiatric disability
Lunatic	Mentally incapacitated
Mental disease/disorder/impairment/illness	Psychiatric disability*or mental condition
Mental health condition	Mental condition
Mental retardation	Intellectual disability
Seniors	Persons who are elderly
Visually impaired	Person with a visual impairment
Unsound mind	Not mentally competent/ Person with a serious mental disability
Ward	Person under/in need of guardianship

### Summary of Changes in HGO Amendment

<i>As Passed Senate</i>	<i>Replacement Terms</i>
Elderly	Elder
Intellectual	Developmental
Developmental	Intellectual
Hearing Impaired	Hard of Hearing
ICF/ID	ICF/DD

*Other Changes:*

- Removes bill sections where underlying statute was repealed during the 2013 legislative session
- Uses alternative statute sections where designated statute sections were used for other language during the 2013 legislative session
- Effective date amended: July 1, 2014