
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 225 Session of
2011

INTRODUCED BY B. BOYLE, MURT, D. O'BRIEN, CALTAGIRONE, CLYMER,
D. COSTA, DeLUCA, DONATUCCI, GOODMAN, HARHAI, HENNESSEY,
JOSEPHS, KAVULICH, KIRKLAND, KORTZ, KULA, LONGIETTI, MANN,
PARKER, PASHINSKI, PAYTON, READSHAW, ROAE, SWANGER AND
VULAKOVICH, APRIL 20, 2011

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, APRIL 20, 2011

A RESOLUTION

1 Urging Pennsylvanians to use the term "intellectually disabled"
2 to describe individuals with a mental impairment.

3 WHEREAS, The term "mental retardation" had been used by
4 physicians, psychologists and other professionals to describe a
5 condition of significant intellectual impairment, but over time,
6 it has devolved into a negative slang term, where someone or
7 something may commonly be referred to as "retarded"; and

8 WHEREAS, The use of this term, or the "r-word" as it is
9 sometimes referenced, in such a derogatory manner is hurtful and
10 insulting to individuals with intellectual disabilities and
11 their families and friends; and

12 WHEREAS, Consequently, many advocacy organizations have even
13 changed their names to replace the term "mentally retarded" or
14 "retardation" with the term "intellectually disabled" or
15 "intellectual disabilities" and are working to spread this
16 practice on a global scale; and

1 WHEREAS, Intellectual disability is one of the most common of
2 disabilities, afflicting approximately seven to eight million
3 Americans of various ethnic, social, economic and educational
4 backgrounds and directly affecting one in ten families in the
5 United States; and

6 WHEREAS, According to a 2009 report by the National
7 Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities, almost
8 614,000 children between three and 21 years of age have some
9 level of intellectual disability; and

10 WHEREAS, According to the President's Committee for People
11 with Intellectual Disabilities, approximately 31% of individuals
12 with intellectual disabilities are employed while more are eager
13 to participate in the labor force; and

14 WHEREAS, Employers have noted that these workers have
15 demonstrated their dedication and work ethic with low rates of
16 absenteeism and a willingness to perform a variety of tasks,
17 thereby contributing to the benefit of the organization, as well
18 as society as a whole; and

19 WHEREAS, The Federal Government, in October 2010, joined in
20 this effort with the signing into law, by President Barack
21 Obama, a measure referred to as "Rosa's Law" resulting in
22 changing references in Federal statutes from mental retardation
23 to intellectual disability and references to a mentally retarded
24 individual as an individual with an intellectual disability; and

25 WHEREAS, There is a worldwide movement to end the use of the
26 "r-word" and to replace it with "intellectual disability" in
27 official documents and public discourse; therefore be it

28 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives urge all
29 Pennsylvanians to stop using the "r-word," to replace it with
30 the term "intellectual disability" and to be mindful that words

- 1 are powerful and can have a significant impact on people and how
- 2 they are viewed by others as well as themselves.