

By: Senator(s) Frazier, Burton, Dearing,  
Harden, Jackson (11th)

To: Public Health and  
Welfare

SENATE BILL NO. 2556

1 AN ACT TO DIRECT STATE AGENCIES AND LEGISLATIVE DRAFTING  
2 OFFICES TO USE CERTAIN RESPECTFUL REFERENCES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH  
3 DISABILITIES IN THE PREPARATION OF REGULATIONS AND LEGISLATION;  
4 AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

6 **SECTION 1.** (1) The Legislature recognizes that language  
7 used in reference to individuals with disabilities shapes and  
8 reflects society's attitudes towards people with disabilities.  
9 Many of the terms currently used diminish the humanity and natural  
10 condition of having a disability. Certain terms are demeaning and  
11 create an invisible barrier to inclusion as equal community  
12 members. The Legislature finds it necessary to clarify preferred  
13 language for new and revised laws by requiring the use of  
14 terminology that puts the person before the disability.

15 (2) The legislative drafting departments of the House and  
16 Senate are directed to avoid all references to: disabled,  
17 developmentally disabled, mentally disabled, mentally ill,  
18 mentally retarded, handicapped, cripple and crippled, in any new  
19 statute, memorial or resolution, and to change such references in  
20 any existing statute, memorial or resolution as sections including  
21 these references are otherwise amended by law. The drafting  
22 departments are directed to replace terms referenced above as  
23 appropriate with the following revised terminology: "individuals  
24 with disabilities," "individuals with developmental disabilities,"  
25 "individuals with mental illness" and "individuals with mental  
26 retardation."

27 (3) No statute, memorial or resolution is invalid because it  
28 does not comply with this section.

29           (4) All state agency orders creating new rules, or amending  
30 existing rules, shall be formulated in accordance with the  
31 requirements of subsection (1) of this section regarding the use  
32 of respectful language.

33           (5) No agency rule is invalid because it does not comply  
34 with this section.

35           **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
36 and after July 1, 2005.