

By: Representative Aldridge

To: Judiciary A

HOUSE BILL NO. 1257

1 AN ACT TO REQUIRE CERTAIN PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO BE USED BY
2 THE LEGISLATURE AND STATE AGENCIES WHEN REFERRING TO PEOPLE WITH
3 DISABILITIES IN NEW LAWS, RULES AND REGULATIONS; AND FOR RELATED
4 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 laws and resolutions by requiring the use of
14 terminology that puts the person before the disability.

15 (2) (a) The Legislature shall not use the following terms
16 in any new statute or resolution after the effective date of this
17 act: disabled, developmentally disabled, mentally disabled,
18 mentally ill, mentally retarded, handicapped, cripple or
19 crippled. After the effective date of this act, all legislation
20 shall instead use the following terms in any new statute or
21 resolution when referring to persons with disabilities:
22 "individuals with disabilities," "individuals with developmental
23 disabilities," "individuals with mental illness" and "individuals
24 with mental retardation."

25 (b) No statute, resolution or any act of the
26 Legislature is invalid because it does not comply with this
27 section.

28 (3) (a) All state agency rules and regulations shall be
29 formulated in accordance with the requirements of subsections (1)
30 and (2) of this section.

31 (b) No agency rule or regulation or act is invalid
32 because it does not comply with this section.

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