

Joann M. Hauff
360 Fifth Street
Marysville MI 48040
(810) 364-6535
jmhauff1@aol.com

It's not acceptable to call me the N-word. (Black)

It's not acceptable to call me a Spic. (Mexican)

To call me a Chink. (Chinese)

To call me a Fag. (Gay/Homosexual)

It is not acceptable to call me a Kike. (Jewish)

It is not acceptable to call me a Retard or call yourself or your friends Retarded.

The R-word is the same as every minority slur. Treat it that way ... and don't use it!

Thank you volunteers.

These volunteers gave a voice to a variety of diverse communities, each of whom expresses that it is not acceptable to call them by what were once common words, but are now recognized as offensive slurs. I am using my voice to **Spread the Word** that it is not acceptable to use the words "retard" and "retarded." I am asking you to take action, to stop using the words and to promote the acceptance and inclusion of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The language we choose effects every one of us, so end the use of the R-word and "**Spread the Word to End the Word**" to your family, friends, and fellow legislatures.

Hi. My name is Joann Hauff and I am honored to have this second opportunity to speak before the Mental Health and Wellness Commission. I had previously testified on September 6, 2013, at the Sanilac County CMH Public Hearing. At that time, I spoke about St. Clair County Community Mental Health and the severe cuts in their services to my daughter and other individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. You might recall me specifically addressing the reduction in Community Living Supports hours and the elimination of the Night Life Activities at Community Enterprises. I also expressed my concern of a conflict of interest in that the St. Clair County & Sanilac County CMH directors are married to each other and that the previous director of SCCCMH has now been appointed interim CEO of the newly formed Region 10. So, having refreshed your memory as to why I may look a little familiar, I would like to switch gears now and go back to the offensive use of the R-word.

I have a beautiful 27 year old daughter who is an individual with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Kristi has been a very enthusiast athlete, participating in countless Michigan Special Olympic Games. The campaign "**Spread the Word to End the Word**" is an ongoing effort by Special Olympics, Best Buddies and other supporters to raise the consciousness of society about the dehumanizing and hurtful effects of the word "retard(ed)" and encourage people to pledge to stop using the R-word. The campaign is intended to engage school organizations and communities to rally and pledge their support in helping to build communities of inclusion and acceptance for all people. I encourage you and everyone here to "**Spread the Word to End the Word**" and take the pledge online at their website: www.r-word.org or on their facebook page..

On October 5, 2010, U.S. President Barak Obama officially signed Bill S. 2781 into federal law; Rosa's Law, which takes its name and inspiration from 9 year old Rosa Marcellino. It removes the terms "mental retardation" and "mentally retarded" from federal health, education and labor policy and replaces them with people first language such as "individual with an intellectual disability" and "intellectual disability."

Champions of Rosa's Law made sure that by updating language in federal law that the bill would not expand nor diminish services, rights, responsibilities or educational opportunities duly owed to individuals with intellectual disabilities. The changes will occur during routine revisions to laws and documents over the next several years. Since the alterations will be implemented gradually, the legislation is not expected to incur any cost. The President's signature and the unanimous support of both the House and Senate show that our elected officials understand and embrace this ideal. The signing of Rosa's Law is a significant milestone in establishing dignity, inclusion and respect for all people with intellectual disabilities.

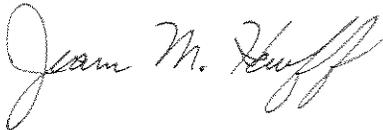
Now this may seem to some people like a minor change, but I think Rosa's brother, Nick, put it best when he said, "What you call people, is how you treat them. If we change the words, maybe it will be the start of a new attitude towards people with disabilities."

Rosa's Law does not require States to make similar changes in their State laws. While President Obama encouraged States to change the terminology used in their respective statutes so that "mentally retarded" and variants of this term are no longer used, the federal government respects a State's prerogative to use terminology as they see fit. Unfortunately, my home state, the Great State of Michigan, is one of only 5 (five) states in the nation that has **NOT** made these changes in terminology. On behalf of your constituents, I am asking you to propose legislation to modify Michigan's statutes and regulations to reflect the change effected by Rosa's Law.

Language affects attitudes. Attitudes impact actions. Please take action to introduce into legislation the **“Spread the Word to End the Word Law”** to show dignity and humanity towards individuals with intellectual disabilities. Also, to proclaim the first Wednesday of every March be designated as the official **“Annual Day of Awareness.”**

This is not about being politically correct. This is about respect.

It has been a privilege, once again, to speak to you and I thank you for your time. Oh, and by the way, my daughter and I are looking forward to be invited to Lansing when you sign this bill into law ! ☺ Thank You.



Joann M. Hauff

September 19, 2013

Enclosures: Has Your State Made the Change?

“Spread the Word to End the Word” Rubber Bracelet

Inclusive Language Legislation



Special Olympics athletes advocate for all people with intellectual disabilities on a local and national level.

Respectful and inclusive language is essential to the movement for the dignity and humanity of people with intellectual disabilities. However, much of society does not recognize the hurtful, dehumanizing and exclusive effects of the word "retard(ed)." In our ongoing effort to create communities of respect where all people are valued, it is important to change the language of our laws at the state and Federal levels.

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retarded" from federal health, education and labor policy and replaces them with people first language "individual with an intellectual disability" and "intellectual disability."

While we've made great strides in changing language on the national level, we still need help encouraging local and state governments to make similar changes. As of March 2012, all but seven states in the United States have at least introduced legislation to change the language in their state from 'mental retardation' to people first language.

UPDATE: On July 1, 2013, the state of Florida became the latest to join our dignity revolution as Senate Bill 142, the Intellectual Disabilities Bill, went into effect. The bill, signed by Gov. Rick Scott, passed the Florida Legislature unanimously in April 2013 and was sponsored by Sen. Thad Altman (R-Melbourne.) The House version of the bill, House Bill 1119, was sponsored by Rep. Janet Adkins (R-Fernandina Beach.)

Use the list below to determine if your home state has made language changes official in your local government. If your state is in the process of making the change – or they haven't begun – contact your local government representatives and tell them:

As a constituent of [your state], I demand respect and inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities and I encourage you to [introduce/support] a measure to change the state's official language from 'mental retardation' to 'people with intellectual disabilities'.

In addition to passing legislation that promotes inclusive language; many states have offered an annual proclamation around our annual day of awareness to help bring attention to our mission. As of March 2012, the following states have issued proclamations during the Spread the Word to End the Word campaign history: California, Connecticut, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Massachusetts, Nebraska, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah and Vermont.

You can see some of the proclamations from 2011 in our Local Government Support slideshow.

Has Your State Made the Change?

- Alabama: Statutory changes during the 2009 Legislative Session
- Alaska: State law (HB357) effective May 10, 2006 revises existing state statute to remove outdated terms and replace with respectful language
- Arizona: Arizona Governor Jan Brewer has signed legislation that removes the words "mental retardation" and "crippled" from state statute. Brewer signed House Bill 2213 in April 2011, and the legislation took effect on Sept. 30, 2011.
- Arkansas: Already passed previous bills, ACT 975 regarding respectful language. Act 98 enhances the previous bill.
- California: Introduced February 24, 2012, this bill is to change the term "mental retardation" to "intellectual disability." The bill passed unanimously in the California State Senate on April 12, 2012.
- Connecticut : Bill signed into law August 24, 2011
- Colorado: NONE
- Delaware : Signed into law August 18, 2011
- Florida: On July 1, 2013, Senate Bill 142, the Intellectual Disabilities Bill, that was signed by Gov. Rick Scott went into effect replacing "mental retardation" with "intellectual disabilities" in the state of Florida.

- Georgia: House Resolution 1897 was read and adopted March 31, 2010
- Hawaii: Signed into law July 11, 2011
- Idaho: Passed in Senate 34-0-1 on 3/1; passed in House 70-0-0 on 3/23; signed by Governor; LAW. Effective 7/1/2011
- Illinois: Senate Bill 1833 changed "mental retardation" and "mentally retarded person" to "intellectual disability," and "intellectually disabled person." Bill effective July 28, 2011.
- Indiana: NONE
- Iowa: This bill was just introduced on February 22, 2012. It has passed the Senate on a unanimous vote and cleared the House on a 96-to-zero vote on March 6, 2012. The bill now awaits the Governor's signature to sign it into law.
- Kansas: Bill introduced February 25, 2012
- Kentucky: Kentucky's governor signed into law House Bill 558 on April 13, 2010 that orders the terms "mentally retardation" be changed to "intellectual disability" across the board. Kentucky's Governor signed House Bill 485 into law on April 18, 2012.
- Louisiana: NONE
- Maine: Governor John E. Baldacci signed into law March 31, 2008 LD 2108 [HP1419]
- Maryland: Governor Martin O'Malley signed into law April 14, 2009 a measure to replace the R word with "intellectual disability" in state regulations and other related state materials.
- Massachusetts: Governor Deval Patrick signed a bill into law August 4, 2010 that replaces the R word with "intellectual disabilities or disability" in the Massachusetts General Laws.
- Michigan: NONE
- Minnesota: The Minnesota Legislature passed legislation that changed the language of statutes and rules to eliminate the use of "mental retardation" in favor of "developmental disabilities.
- Mississippi: Bill signed into law Senate Bill 3004 in April 2010
- Missouri: Signed into law July 12, 2011
- Montana: Uses 'person with a developmental disability' in most general statutory language; retains 'mental retardation' as a term of medical use with clear meaning.
- Nebraska: On June 4, 2013 LB23 was approved by Gov. Dave Heineman. LB23 contains a provision to replace all occurrences of "mental retardation" with "intellectual disability."
- Nevada: SB 149 approved by Governor on June 16, 2011
- New Hampshire: In 2008, New Hampshire Governor John Lynch signed a bill into law that would change language in all of our state laws that have the words 'mental retardation'
- New Jersey: Bill signed into law August 16, 2010
- New Mexico: In January 2012, changed name of Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation
- New York: Senate bill 7889 was signed into law by Governor Paterson on July 13, 2010
- North Carolina: NONE
- North Dakota: Bill signed into law August 2011
- Ohio: Bill 79 was signed by Governor Ted Strickland on July 7, 2009 changing the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities to the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities
- Oklahoma: Senate Bill 2017, effective November 1, 2006, Section 3 item 2 declares citizens will "Replace nonrespectful language referring to persons with disabilities as persons first"
- Oregon: Senate Bill 3 effective June 28, 2011; Modifies terminology in education statutes for persons with intellectual disability
- Pennsylvania: Bill signed into law December 2011
- Rhode Island: Rhode Island Governor Donald L. Carcieri signed into law a measure that changes the name of the Department of Mental Health, Retardation, and Hospitals to the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals (BHDDH)
- South Carolina: Governor Nikki Haley signed Act 47, passed unanimously by the legislature, to remove the terms "mental retardation" and "mentally retarded" from state law
- South Dakota: HB 1012 passed January 20, 2011
- Tennessee: Bill signed into law May, 12 2011
- Texas: Bill signed into law July 19, 2011
- Utah: Introduced bill in 2011 legislative session that replaces outdated or derogatory terms relating to 10 persons with a disability with current, non-derogatory terms
- Vermont: Bill signed into law May 11, 2011
- Virginia: Passed the R word bill in 2009 to amend the Code of Virginia to eliminate all references to the R word
- Washington: HB2490 removes the words "mentally retarded" from Washington state statutes was signed into law March 17, 2010 by Gov. Chris Gregoire.
- West Virginia: Passed in February 2010
- Wisconsin: On March 13, 2012, the Assembly approved by voice vote Senate Bill 377, Wisconsin's People First Law.
- Wyoming: Introduced a House Joint Resolution in 2008 urging Wyoming state agencies to replace references to 'mental retardation' in documents