



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Shelley B. Mayer

Senator Mayer and Assemblymember Benedetto Legislation to Use Appropriate Language for People with Disabilities Signed into Law by Governor Hochul

SENATOR SHELLEY B. MAYER October 5, 2023

| ISSUE: **NEW YORK EDUCATION LAW, DISABILITY**

Replaces Instances of “Handicapping Conditions” with “Disabilities”

(**Albany, New York**) - New York State Senator Shelley B. Mayer (SD-37) and Assemblymember Michael Benedetto (AD-82) announce their legislation, [S.4041A/A.7258A](#), to replace certain instances of the words “handicapping conditions” with “disabilities” has been signed into law by Governor Kathy Hochul.

This legislation will modernize New York Education Law to be consistent with Federal Law and dignified phrasing conventions. Prior to this legislation, New York Law had not modernized the language used to describe people with varying abilities since 1976, despite an update to Federal Law in 1990. With this change, New York Education Law will reflect the state’s recognition of people with varying abilities.

New York State Senator Shelley B. Mayer said, “I am pleased New York is taking another step in modernizing New York Education Law by ensuring we use appropriate language for people with disabilities. Previous phrasing is outdated and this change reflects our commitment to recognizing people with varying abilities. I thank Assemblymember Michael Benedetto for championing this legislation in the Assembly, and Governor Kathy Hochul for signing it into

law. I also thank the Executive Director of the New York State Association of Counties, Stephen Acquario for his assistance in crafting this legislation."

Assemblymember Michael Benedetto said, "As a former special education teacher with over two decades of experience, I deeply understand the significance of ensuring that every individual receives dignified and respectful treatment. For far too long, our education laws have not aligned with these fundamental values. I am delighted to collaborate with Senator Mayer to rectify this situation. I extend my gratitude to Governor Hochul for signing our bill into law, and I commend the tireless efforts of the advocates who played a crucial role in pushing forward these essential reforms."

NYSAC Executive Director Stephen Acquario said, "Words matter, and our fellow New Yorkers with disabilities deserve to have their dignity respected by the language of the laws of our state. Senator Mayer has long been a champion of legislation to modernize our state laws with respect to people with disabilities and we're incredibly proud to have partnered with her on this important legislation to ensure the text of our laws reflect the values of our people. This is a tremendous win for the disabled community, and we thank Senator Mayer for pushing this legislation across the finish line and applaud Governor Hochul for signing this bill into law."

This new law took effect on September 14 upon being signed into law by Governor Kathy Hochul.

RELATED LEGISLATION

2023-A7258A

-
- Introduced

 - ◦ In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate

 - ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate

 - ◦ Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate

 - Delivered to Governor

 - Signed By Governor

 -

Relates to replacing certain instances of the words handicapping conditions with disabilities

May 16, 2023

Assembly Floor Calendar

Do you support this bill?