



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Shelley B. Mayer

## Senator Mayer Commemorates 30th Anniversary of Americans with Disabilities Act with Passage of Her Bill to Update State Laws with More Respectful & Inclusive Language

SHELLEY B. MAYER July 24, 2020

| ISSUE: **AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT**



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30th Anniversary of Americans with  
Disabilities Act with Passage of Her Bill  
to Update State Laws with More  
Respectful & Inclusive Language**

Westchester, NY -- State Senator Shelley B. Mayer, Chair of the Senate Education Committee, commemorated the 30th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, with the Senate passage of her bill [S.7650](#) to update the Education Law with inclusive and respectful language. The Assembly still needs to pass the bill.

**Senator Shelley B. Mayer** said, “I am pleased to work with the disability advocacy community to update our state laws with more inclusive and respectful language. Words matter, and words can hurt. Updating the language used in our laws is important to show that all New Yorkers are respected under the law. Thank you to the New York State Association of Counties which brought this issue to my attention. Thirty years of the Americans with Disabilities Act has brought great advances for people with disabilities, but we still have much more work to do to ensure access to employment opportunities, housing, and making it easier for people with disabilities to vote. I look forward to continuing to work with the community, and learn from them, to make our laws more inclusive and more just.”

**Stephen Acquario, Executive Director of the New York State Association of Counties**, said, “Counties across the state applaud Senator Mayer’s courageous action to amend an outdated and disrespectful law. This bill has been a priority of NYSAC and we are honored to have worked with Senator Mayer to support its passage in the Senate. We need to get this legislation over the finish line and ensure the Assembly acts swiftly to bring greater respect to this community within our state.”

**Maria Samuels, Executive Director of Westchester Disabled on the Move (WDOM)**, said, “Words can demean and dehumanize. It is difficult to tell a person, especially a child, that a word does not define a person, so it does not matter. It does matter, and unfortunately, it can define you in the eyes of others and limit your possibilities. This law is a much-needed step forward. Thank you to Senator Shelley Mayer for always listening, learning, and standing with the disability advocacy community.”

S.7650 amends the NY Education Law by replacing the words “handicapping conditions” with the word “disabilities”. Enacted in 1976, Article 89 of the Education Law uses outdated language that is not acceptable when describing individuals with differing abilities. The corresponding Federal Law was amended in 1990 with updated language, but the New York

law had yet to be updated until the passage of S.7650.

The Americans with Disabilities Act will celebrate 30 years on Sunday, July 26th. In past years, Senator Shelley Mayer has joined with Westchester Disabled on the Move (WDOM) to commemorate the occasion with a celebration in the district. This year, she will be joining the WDOM team for a virtual celebration on Zoom.

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### 2019-S7650

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- 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

February 04, 2020

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by **Shelley B. Mayer**

Do you support this bill?