



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Shelley B. Mayer

Long Island: Governor Hochul Signs Legislation To Support New Yorkers With Disabilities

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Governor Kathy Hochul today signed key legislation to support New Yorkers with disabilities. Legislation (S.7094/A.6543) renames the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council to be the State Council on Developmental Disabilities and updates its membership to reflect the diversity of the state. Legislation (S.3313B/A.5879A) updates outdated language used in the private housing law, the public authorities law, and the New York State medical care facilities finance agency Act. Legislation (S.4041-A/A.7258-A) replaces certain instances of the words “handicapping conditions” with disabilities related to children with such disabilities.

“It is important to myself and the State of New York that we remain up to date and respectful of individuals at all times,” **Governor Hochul said.** “This legislative package will allow changes to outdated language in our State laws and continues our efforts to help strengthen the rights of all New Yorkers.”

Legislation (S.7094/A.6543) makes important updates to the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council, which supports individuals with developmental disabilities through programs that promote self-advocacy, participation, and inclusion in all facets of community life. The legislation will enable fresh perspectives to be heard on the council by implementing a diverse, rotating membership. The bill also renames the council to the State Council on Developmental Disabilities.

State Senator John W. Mannion said, “These changes to the State Council on Developmental Disabilities ensure New York prioritizes diversity and puts individuals with disabilities and their families first. Thank you, Governor Hochul, for signing this important legislation.”

Assemblymember Rebecca Seawright said, “I commend Governor Hochul for her leadership in signing into law our legislation to significantly promote inclusion, dignity, and respect for New Yorkers living with disabilities. Through the Governor’s action, together with the State Legislature, we are most substantially increasing representation of people with disabilities on our State’s planning council and renaming the ‘Disabilities Planning Council’ to the ‘State Council on Developmental Disabilities,’ implementing person-first language to put the person before their disability. We are also updating the outdated and offensive language “mentally retarded” to “developmental disability.” These changes are a huge step in the right direction for achieving full equality for New Yorkers with disabilities.”

Legislation (S.3313-B/A.5879-A) allows updates to outdated language used in the private housing finance law, the public authorities law, and also the New York State medical care facilities finance agency act.

State Senator James Skoufis said, "There is no justification for perpetuating hurtful language when referring to individuals with intellectual disabilities. Terms like 'mentally retarded' belong to a bygone era. I thank Governor Hochul for signing this bill to replace such terms with more respectful language to foster inclusion for individuals living with intellectual disabilities throughout New York."

Legislation (S.4041-A/A.7258-A) is designed to replace certain instances of the term “handicapping conditions” with “disabilities” related to children with such disabilities in the education law. This will modernize the New York Education Law to be consistent with the federal law and dignified phrasing conventions.

State Senator Shelley 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. By replacing the words ‘handicapping conditions’ with ‘disabilities,’ New York will use appropriate language that reflects our commitment to recognizing people with varying abilities and will be consistent with Federal law. I thank Assemblymember Michael Benedetto for championing this legislation in the Assembly, and Governor Kathy Hochul for signing it into law.”

Assemblymember Michael Benedetto said, “Words have meaning and words can be hurtful even when they are not intended to hurt. It is time we fix this injustice with this legislation. I applaud Governor Hochul for seeing that the time is long overdue.”

<https://www.longisland.com/news/09-15-23/governor-hochul-signs-legislation-to-support-new-yorkers-with-disabilities.html>