



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Addabbo Announces Bill That Eliminates Offensive Terminology for People WITH Developmental Disabilities

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR May 24, 2011

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Awaits Governor's Decision; Highlights Bill that Employs Individuals with Developmental Disabilities

Queens, NY, May 24, 2011 – NYS Senator **Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr.** (D-Queens) announced the passage of legislation that would eliminate references of the terms “mental retardation” and “mentally retarded” in the Mental Hygiene Law. The bill (S.4467) was passed by the New York State Senate and previously in the Assembly; it now awaits action from Governor Andrew M. Cuomo.

“I supported this bill because the terms “mental retardation” and “mentally retarded” are offensive terms,” explained Addabbo. “These individuals with developmental disabilities should not have to sustain belittling through the usage of offensive terminology.”

In the past, Senator Addabbo has worked on legislation for individuals with disabilities. He pointed to a bill he introduced in March 2011 that would offer small business owners a tax credit for the hiring and retaining of individuals with disabilities (S.4107). “Because of a tough job market and the financial restraints all residents currently face in this ongoing recession, it is vital that incentives are available to small business owners who employ these disadvantaged individuals. They face an almost two-to-one discrepancy in earned median salaries,” said Addabbo.

Should S.4467 be signed into law, it would follow a string of measures taken by the state legislature to move away from the terminology “mental retardation.” In 2007, a law was signed requiring the use of person-centered language when referring to individuals with disabilities. Last year, the New York State agency, “Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities” was changed to the “Office for People with Developmental Disabilities.”

“We should always be respectful and mindful of these courageous individuals who endure unfair obstacles and disadvantages in today’s society,” concluded Addabbo.

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