



June 2, 2025

The Honorable Pete Sessions
2204 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mark Pocan
1026 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Hudson
2112 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton
2136 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Congressman Sessions, Congressman Pocan, Congresswoman Holmes Norton, and
Congressman Hudson:

The National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS) empowers individuals with Down syndrome and their families by driving policy change, providing resources, engaging with local communities, and shifting public perceptions. We write today in strong support of the passage of the *Words Matter Act of 2025* (H.R. 3420), which would remove the terms “mentally retarded” and “mental retardation” from the U.S. Code.

The Words Matter Act aims to remove these harmful and offensive terms in favor of more modern terms such as “intellectually disabled” and “intellectual disability.” While progress has been made on this front, such as the passage of the 2010 “Rosa’s Law,” this legislation only applied to several specific federal laws rather than to the entirety of U.S. law. Thus, numerous sections of our country’s code still employ terminology that is outdated and harmful. By removing these offensive terms, our government not only continues the work of combating discriminatory speech but also reaffirms its commitment to serving and respecting all members of our community.

NDSS strives to ensure all individuals with Down syndrome are assured of their human rights and valued by a more inclusive society. Aligned with this vision, we urge Congress to act and ensure that the legal texts that serve as the foundation for our modern society are reflective of and respectful towards the people they were written to serve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kandi Pickard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Kandi Pickard
President and CEO
National Down Syndrome Society