



February 6, 2023

Re: SB 332 and HB 446

As the leading human rights organization for all individuals with Down syndrome, the National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS) strongly supports the passage of SB 332 and HB 446, which would remove offensive and outdated language from Texas state law.

Today, Texas state laws still include outdated and offensive language, including the use of the word “retarded” and its many derivatives to refer to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This is not in line with current practice, as the term has become demeaning over time.

HB 446 and SB 332 will change this wording to “intellectually disabled”, which is more appropriate and widely accepted by the disability community. The changes proposed in these bills will not alter the original intent of the legislation passed, only the way it references individuals with disabilities.

The language used in state laws and statutes matters. Continuing to use outdated and derogatory language in statutes hinders the progress being made in the disability community.

NDSS urges the Texas legislature to take action to eliminate the use of this language in statute, and thanks you for your leadership regarding this important piece of legislation. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our Manager of State Government Relations, Nick Leto, at nleto@ndss.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kandi Pickard". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping "O" at the end.

Kandi Pickard
President and CEO
National Down Syndrome Society