

A JOINT MEMORIAL

URGING THE GOVERNOR, MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH OF GOVERNMENT AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURE TO TAKE MEANINGFUL STEPS TO RECOGNIZE THE VALUE, AND RESPECT THE DIGNITY, OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED.

WHEREAS, developmental disability is a natural part of the human experience, affecting thousands of New Mexico children and adults and millions of Americans; and

WHEREAS, all people with developmental disabilities can be productive, contributing members of their communities; and

WHEREAS, according to the Cornell university disability status report, the prevalence of disability in New Mexico in 2008 was thirteen and six-tenths percent of people of all ages; and

WHEREAS, the employment rate of working-age people living with disabilities in New Mexico in 2008 was forty-one and one-fifth percent; and

WHEREAS, in order to be actively employed, it is often necessary to drive to one's place of employment, an activity that should be available to those with developmental disabilities in the same way as it is available to the general public; and

WHEREAS, the federal Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 seeks to ensure that

individuals with developmental disabilities are able to participate fully in their communities through integration and inclusion in the economic, political, social, cultural, religious and educational sectors of society; and

WHEREAS, that federal act seeks to ensure that individuals with developmental disabilities and their families participate in the design of, and have access to, culturally competent services, supports and other assistance and opportunities that promote independence, productivity, integration and inclusion in the community; and

WHEREAS, according to the mission statement of the New Mexico center for development and disability, the full inclusion of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families into their communities involves engaging individuals in making life choices, partnering with communities to build resources and improving systems of care; and

WHEREAS, behaviors and attitudes of state government and members of the legislature should reflect these goals in any interactions with individuals with developmental disabilities, whether in the public or in private settings; and

WHEREAS, language is a reflection of how people see each other, and it can be used to build up or tear down a person's self-esteem; and

WHEREAS, responsible communicators carefully choose

language that reflects the dignity of people with developmental disabilities, opting for words that put the person, rather than the disability, first; and

WHEREAS, all opportunities to treat adults and children with developmental disabilities with respect should be pursued at every opportunity in order to promote positive perceptions of all people in all walks of life, including those individuals with developmental disabilities;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the governor, members of the executive branch of government and members of the legislature be urged to take meaningful steps to recognize the value and respect the dignity of individuals who are developmentally disabled; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this respect and value be reflected in policy, in personal interactions with individuals with developmental disabilities and in the consideration of legislative initiatives; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a sincere and dedicated effort be exerted to identify and eradicate incidents of harsh labeling used in official dialogue and official documents throughout government in the state; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the governor, all cabinet secretaries and the university of New Mexico center for development and

disability.