

**DEPARTMENT OF SERVICES FOR PERSONS
WITH DISABILITIES**

CITY OF NEW HAVEN
Gretchen Knauff, Director



June 24, 2022

Honorable Tyisha Walker-Myers, President
Board of Alders of the City of New Haven
165 Church Street
New Haven, CT 06510

**RE: MODERNIZATION OF CITY ORDINANCES TO REFLECT LANGUAGE THAT
IS RESPECTFUL TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.**

Dear President Walker-Myers:

The Department of Services for Persons with Disabilities and the Commission on Disabilities are submitting to you and the honorable members of the Board of Alders this petition to modernize the language in the ordinances to make them more respectful to people with disabilities. The current ordinance language reflects outdated terminology to describe people with disabilities. The proposed changes mirror updated language in both state and federal law.

The language used to refer to people with disabilities has changed during the past 30 years. The updated language, referred to as "Person First Language," emphasizes the person first rather than the disability. Disability does not define a person; it is a part of who they are just like eye or skin color. For example, in the proposed ordinance amendments, the term "person with a disability" is substituted for the term "handicapped person." The term "intellectual disability" has been substituted for the outdated term "mental retardation."

The proposed amendments update the language but do not change the intent of the ordinances. There is no fiscal impact to these changes.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'GK' followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line.

Gretchen Knauff
Director