



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
DISTRICT 2
File #: 20-536

Board Meeting Date: 7/21/2020

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: Supervisor Carole Groom, District 2

Subject: Ordinance Amending Sections 3.68.090, 3.69.070, 5.44.050 and 6.04.040 of The San Mateo County Ordinance Code to Remove References to the Term "Handicapped Persons" In Favor of The Term "Persons with Disabilities" and (2) Resolution Encouraging the use by County Agencies, Officials and Employees of "Person First" Language to the Extent Practicable in County Ordinances, Resolutions, Policies, Signage, and Other Documents

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommendation to:

- A) Approve the introduction of an ordinance amending Sections 3.68.090, 3.69.070, 5.44.050 and 6.04.040 of the San Mateo County Ordinance Code to remove references to the term "Handicapped Persons" in favor of the term "Persons with Disabilities" and waive of the reading of the ordinance in its entirety; and
- B) Adopt a resolution encouraging the use by County agencies, officials and employees of "Person First" Language in County ordinances, resolutions, policies, signage, and other documents.

BACKGROUND:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has reported that approximately sixty-one million adults in the United States (*i.e.*, 26% of the adult population), report having a disability. In San Mateo County, this is approximately 143,000 residents. Most Americans will experience a disability some time during the course of their lives.

According to the CDC, "people first" language should be used to speak appropriately and respectfully about an individual with a disability. People first language emphasizes the person first not the disability, and conveys the understanding that people are more than their disabilities. For example, when referring to a person with a disability, refer to the person first by using phrases such as: "a person who...", "a person with...", or a person who has..." Language to avoid includes such terms as "the disabled," "handicapped," or "special needs person." The CDC recommends avoiding language that implies that people with disabilities have limitations, deserve pity or are characterized only by their disabilities.

DISCUSSION:

This proposed ordinance amends several sections of the San Mateo County Ordinance Code to change the terms used from "handicapped persons" to "persons with a disability" in accordance with the above guidelines.

The proposed resolution would encourage the use by County agencies, officials and employees of "person first" language in County ordinances, resolutions, policies, communications, signage and other documents.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.