

For Immediate Release

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Disability Rights Wisconsin Commends Signing of SB 19

Disability Rights Wisconsin (DRW), the designated Protection and Advocacy system for people with disabilities, commends the signing of Senate Bill 19, which removes offensive language about Wisconsinites with intellectual disabilities from administrative rules.

While people with intellectual disabilities have made a significant amount of progress in Wisconsin, our terminology has not kept pace. This bill is very important to individuals with intellectual disabilities who find these terms insulting and derogatory and will continue the work that began in 2011 when Wisconsin policymakers approved this change to language in state law.

“Respectful language helps to build communities that are inclusive of people of all abilities”, stated DRW Executive Director Lea Kitz. “This bill is a reminder to all of us to use respectful, people-first language.”

DRW thanks Representative Jagler and Senator Fitzgerald for their leadership advancing this policy change, and thanks Governor Evers for signing SB 19 into law today. It is especially encouraging to see that this bill moved forward with unanimous support and is the very first bill signed by Governor Evers. DRW looks forward to future opportunities to work with policy makers to advance Wisconsin’s commitment to equity and inclusion for Wisconsinites of all abilities.

Disability Rights Wisconsin is the federally mandated Protection and Advocacy system for the State of Wisconsin, charged with protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities and keeping individuals free from abuse and neglect.

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