

THE AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN

RESOLUTION: 07-9-C
SUBMITTED BY: 8th District
SUBJECT: Renaming the Aging and Handicapped Subcommittee

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Although handicapped is widely used in both law and every day speech to refer to people having physical or mental disabilities, those described by the word tend to prefer the expression "disabled" or "people with disabilities"; and

WHEREAS, Handicapped, a somewhat euphemistic term, may imply a helplessness that is not suggested by the more forthright disabled; and

WHEREAS, It is also felt that some stigma may attach to the word handicapped because of its origin in the phrase "hand in cap", actually derived from a game of chance but sometimes mistakenly believed to involve the image of a beggar and is sometimes taken to be offensive; and

WHEREAS, The word "handicapped" is best reserved to describe a disabled person who is unable to function owing to some property of the environment. Thus, people with a physical disability requiring a wheelchair may or may not be handicapped, depending on whether wheelchair ramps are made available to them; and

WHEREAS, Disabled is the clear preference in contemporary American English in referring to people having either physical or mental impairments, with the impairments themselves preferably termed disabilities; and

WHEREAS, The organization Disabled American Veterans (DAV) have preferred the term "disabled" over "handicapped" since 1920 when Captain Robert S. Marx of Cincinnati, Ohio, first named the organization The Disabled American Veterans of the World War (DAVWW); now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion, Department of Michigan, in annual Department Convention assembled in Dearborn, Michigan, June 14-17, 2007, That the name of the Handicapped and Aging Subcommittee be changed to Disabled and Aging Subcommittee at all levels of The American Legion to correctly identify the work of the committee without causing offense to those that the committee is called upon to assist.