

Rep. Pete Sessions statement for the record

March 26, 2026

Judiciary Markup- H.R. 3420, the Words Matter Act

Mr. Chairman,

I want to thank you and the Committee for bringing forward this important piece of legislation and for allowing it to be marked up and advance in the legislative process.

This bill aligns with work we have done across Congress to ensure that individuals with disabilities are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of jurisdiction or committee boundaries.

I have been proud to help lead efforts over the years to champion the rights of individuals with disabilities, and this legislation continues that commitment.

H.R. 3420, the Words Matter Act, takes a straightforward but meaningful step by replacing antiquated terminology in federal law with language that properly reflects the dignity of Americans living with intellectual disabilities.

This is about more than words. It is about recognition, respect, and ensuring that federal statute reflects modern understanding and basic human dignity.

We have seen in other areas, particularly in disability policy, that updating language is not just symbolic, it shapes how individuals are treated, how programs are administered, and how people see themselves within our society.

This is bipartisan, commonsense legislation that brings federal law in line with the values we all share.

For the families, advocates, and individuals who have worked for years to see this change, this legislation means a great deal.

I want to thank our Democratic co-leaders Congressman Mark Pocan, Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton, and Republican co-leaders Congressman Ryan Zinke and Congressman Richard Hudson for there efforts on this as well. I urge my colleagues to support it.