



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

GUBERNATORIAL PROCLAMATION

Whereas, up to three percent of the world's population - almost 200 million people - have intellectual disabilities. People with intellectual and development disabilities are capable, they enjoy sharing life experiences, and they work together toward athletic excellence while developing enriching friendships through participation in the Special Olympics and Best Buddies International programs. They also can attend school, work, and contribute to society in many positive ways; and

Whereas, Special Olympics' Multi-National Public Opinion Study of Attitudes toward People with Intellectual Disabilities, conducted by Gallup, reveals that throughout the world, over 60 percent of people still believe that individuals with intellectual disabilities should be segregated in schools and in the workplace. This is an attitude that must be changed; and

Whereas, young people around the world are taking a stand and raising awareness of the dehumanizing and hurtful effects of the words "retard" or "retarded" (the R-word) and are helping encourage others to think before they speak. Often used as a taunt to denote behavior that is clumsy, hapless, and even hopeless, the R-word conjures up a painful stereotype of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities; and

Whereas, through the "Spread the Word to End the Word" movement, young people are asking society to help create a more accepting world for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and all those people that may appear different, but have unique gifts and talents to share with the world; and

Whereas, the movement was started by athletes, friends, and students in 2009, the same year that Special Olympics founder Eunice Kennedy Shriver passed away and left a legacy that provides athletics and friendship opportunities to more than 3.2 million athletes in 170 countries; and

Whereas, to help change the conversation and help eliminate the demeaning use of the R-word from today's popular youth vernacular, young people are encouraging everyone to visit www.r-word.org and make their pledge to not use the R-word. They have set a goal of obtaining 100,000 pledges by March 3, 2010; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, DONALD L. CARCIERI, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS, DO HEREBY PROCLAIM,

March 3, 2010

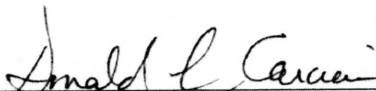
as

"Spread the Word to End the Word" Day

in the State of Rhode Island and call upon all citizens to in recognizing the importance of this day.

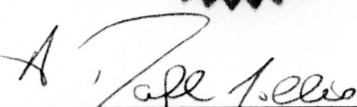


In recognition whereof, I have hereby set my hand and caused the Seal of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations to be hereunto affixed this 3rd day of March 2010.



Donald L. Carcieri

Governor


A. Ralph Mollis
Secretary of State