



New York amended the state laws by removing the word 'inmate':

New York has brought changes to a handful of state laws. Most recently, they have removed the word 'inmate' and reciprocated it with the phrase 'incarcerated person .' This refers to the person serving prison time. The alterations are officially signed by Gov. Kathy Hochul. This is done to reduce the stigma of being in jail and release the peer pressures upon them.

The reform advocates had stated that the term 'inmate' was humiliating and insulting for the prisoners/ especially when the jail guards referred to them as 'inmates' in front of their family and friends upon visits. State Senator Gustavo Rivera, A Bronx Democrat, states that 'language matters. He further added that it is a concrete measure toward improving the criminal justice system. The system emphasizes rehabilitation rather than giving punishment and penalties.

On the contrary, the republicans have ridiculed the step and criticized the move. Chris Tague from Republicans stated that this reform was introduced at a time when criminal activities spiked in New York. This was already an alarming situation, and this revealed the democrat's agenda. They further said it is an outdated initiative that is equally offensive.

Moreover, last month Hochul signed the legislation by replacing the term mentally retarded with 'developmentally disabled. In the past, there have been similar changes in gender equality. In 2018, the words such as 'policeman' and 'fireman' were replaced by words like; ' police officers' and 'firefighters.'

This action is the continuity of the prior steps taken. The senior professor at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Michel DeGraff, said, 'choice of words matters greatly especially when vulnerable people of the society are concerned or involved. He further stated that if you tell someone is a born enslaved person, that means you are categorizing him as an enslaved person in nature. No one is born into slavery. He also said that by altering the words, you could change people's past, present, and future. It also assists in better understanding them.

The opponents have associated the move with political gains. They said that they fear the rise in criminal activities. As per the statistics, there has been a consistent rise in violent crime rates across the country, especially after the COVID-19 Pandemic. For it, the Hochul has argued that safety and justice go hand in hand with one another.

He emphasized improving the public safety of New Yorkers along with more respect, dignity, and humility.

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