

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH  
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



**PA 12-136**—sHB 5437  
*Public Health Committee*

**AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEFINITIONS OF MENTAL  
RETARDATION AND INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY**

**SUMMARY:** This act updates the statutory definition of “mental retardation” to mean (1) a significant limitation in intellectual functioning and (2) deficits in adaptive behavior that originated during the developmental period before age 18.

Under the act, “significant limitation in intellectual functioning” means an intelligence quotient (I.Q.) more than two standard deviations below the mean. An I.Q. must be measured by general intellectual function tests that are individualized, standardized, and clinically and culturally appropriate to the individual. The act requires that adaptive behavior be measured by tests that are individualized, standardized, and clinically and culturally appropriate, but does not require that they test intellectual functions.

Prior law defined mental retardation as a general intellectual functioning that is significantly subaverage. It must coincide with deficits in adaptive behavior and have manifested during the developmental period before age 18.

By law, mental retardation has the same meaning as intellectual disability in most statutes. (PA 11-16 substituted the term “intellectual disability” for mental retardation in several statutes to reflect changes in federal law and common usage.) Among other things, the definition is used in laws dealing with criminal law and the provision of services to people with intellectual disabilities.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2012

OLR Tracking: ND:KM:PF:ts