



## PROCLAMATION

**WHEREAS**, around the world, exclusion and discrimination continues to divide people with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities; and

**WHEREAS**, founded by two youth leaders in 2009 as Spread the Word to End the Word, the campaign focused its first 10 years on addressing a particularly powerful form of exclusion: the word 'retard(ed)'. Over the 10 years, leaders and self-advocates collected millions of digital and physical pledges to end the R-word. Each was a personal commitment to acknowledge the hurt caused by the R-word and to be respectful in the words and actions taken towards people with intellectual and developmental disabilities; and

**WHEREAS**, In 2019, Spread the Word to End the Word became Spread the Word, with a focus not just on the elimination of a word but on the creation of a new reality: inclusion for all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities; and

**WHEREAS**, we ask the citizens of Key West to pledge to Spread the Word. Your pledge signifies a powerful stance against derogatory language targeted at individuals with intellectual disabilities and your commitment calls for change, inspiring others to follow suit and join the collective effort to eliminate derogatory language; and

**WHEREAS**, together we can create a society where everyone is valued, celebrated, and free from the impact of harmful stereotypes.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, TERI JOHNSTON, MAYOR of the City of Key West, along with the entire Key West City Commission do hereby proclaim the month of March as

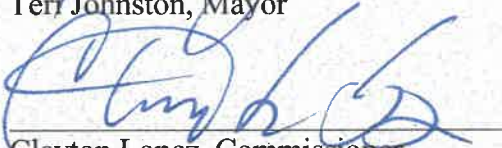
## SPREAD THE WORD MONTH FOR INCLUSION

in the "Southernmost City of the Continental United States." I would like to urge all citizens, residents, and visitors of our Southernmost City to participate fittingly in this observation.

WITNESS my hand and seal of the City of Key West, Florida, this 14<sup>th</sup> day of March 2024.



  
Teri Johnston, Mayor

  
Clayton Lopez, Commissioner