

LPA and the USDA

The board and the membership of Little People of America (LPA), the world's oldest and largest dwarfism support organization for people with dwarfism and their families, is strongly in favor of the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) of the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) proposal to revise the United States Standards for Grades of Processed Raisins by removing five references to the term "midget" throughout the standards. On May 13, 2013, AMS received a letter from the Little People of America stating that we "are trying to raise awareness around and eliminate the use of the word 'midget'." The letter further stated that, "Though the use of the word midget by the USDA when classifying certain food products is benign, Little People of America, and the dwarfism community, hopes that the USDA would consider phasing out the term midget." We are thankful that the USDA considered and listened to this important request.

The word "midget" is used as a derogatory slur to refer to people of short stature. Whether or not the intention of using the word is to bully and to demean, or just as a synonym for small, the term has been deemed a slur by those within the community and should be eliminated accordingly. In a recent organizational statement, LPA put forward a call to action to abolish the word from the everyday nomenclature and to replace it with synonymous designations when necessary. The proposal by the AMS supports this call and is a model for other entities that use the word "midget" as a designation to consider changing this language.