



## Legislative Endorsement

**Bill No. and Title:** Bill S 1257 H 2090 An Act establishing a special commission to study and report on the history of state institutions for people with developmental and mental health disabilities in the Commonwealth

**Sponsor(s) and Committee:** Sen. Barret, Rep. Garbally, State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

**Legislative History:** Hearing: June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021

**Legislation Text:** SECTION 1. There is hereby established a special commission to study and report on the history of state institutions for people with developmental and mental health disabilities in the Commonwealth. The commission shall be independent of supervision or control by any executive agency and shall provide objective perspectives on the matters before it.

In fulfillment of its responsibility the commission shall (1) review existing records in the possession of the commonwealth from, and related to, the network of state institutions for people with developmental disabilities and mental health issues; (2) examine the current availability of, and barriers to, accessing those records for former residents, their descendants, relatives, and the general public; (3) assess the quality of life of former residents now living in the community; (4) assess and compile records of burial locations for all residents who died while in the care of the commonwealth, (5) determine the likelihood and possible location of unmarked graves at former state institutions (6) present a human rights framework for public recognition of the commonwealth's guardianship of citizens with disabilities throughout history, including recommendations for memorialization and public education; (7) collect testimonials from former residents of state institutions as part of a human rights report (8) and submit its findings and recommendations to the secretary of the commonwealth, the clerks of the senate and the house of representatives, the chairs of the joint committee on children families and persons with disabilities not later than January 1, 2023. The secretary shall make the report publicly available.

SECTION 2. The commission shall consist of 18 members, 1 of whom shall be a designee of the department of health and human services; 1 of whom shall be a designee of the department of developmental services; 1 of whom shall be a 2 designee of the department of mental health; 1 of whom shall be a designee of the secretary of the commonwealth archives; 1 of whom shall be a designee of the secretary of the commonwealth office of the state archaeologist; 2 of whom shall be the chairs of the joint committee on persons with disabilities or their designee; 1 of whom shall be a representative of the disabled persons protection commission; 1 of whom shall be a representative of the centers for independent living in Massachusetts; 1 of whom shall be a former resident of a state institution for people with mental illness appointed by the governor; 1 of whom shall be a former resident of a state institution for people with cognitive and developmental disabilities appointed by the governor; 1 of whom shall be designee of the Arc of Massachusetts; 1 of whom shall be a designee of the Disability Law Center; 1 of whom shall be a designee of Mass Advocates

Standing Strong; 1 of whom shall be a designee of Mass Advocates Organizing for Change. 1 of whom shall be a community member designated by the governor; 1 of whom shall be a community member designated by the senate president; and 1 of whom shall be a community member designated by speaker of the house of representatives. A majority of the members of the commission must identify as persons with disabilities. In making appointments, the chairperson shall, to the maximum extent feasible, ensure that the commission represents a broad distribution of perspectives and geographic regions.

<https://malegislature.gov/Bills/192/S1257>

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<b>Endorsed by 32 members of Dignity Alliance Massachusetts including:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Boston Center for Independent Living</li> <li>● Center for Living and Work, Inc.</li> <li>● COP Amputee Association –COPAA</li> <li>● Disability Policy Consortium</li> <li>● Disability Resource Center</li> <li>● Easterseals Massachusetts</li> <li>● John Ford, Esq.</li> <li>● Lachan Farrow, MD</li> <li>● Judi Fonsh, LCSW, MSW</li> <li>● Wynn Gerhard</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Pamela Goodwin</li> <li>● Greater Boston Chapter of United Spinal Association</li> <li>● Fred Gross</li> <li>● Jerry Halberstadt, Stop Bullying Coalition</li> <li>● Sandy Hovey</li> <li>● Anne Johansen</li> <li>● James Lomastro, PhD</li> <li>● Paul J. Lanzikos</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Massachusetts Advocates for Nursing Home Reform, Arlene Germain, Policy Director</li> <li>● Massachusetts Aging and Mental Health Coalition</li> <li>● Massachusetts Law Reform Institute</li> <li>● MetroWest Center for Independent Living, Paul Spooner, Executive Director</li> <li>● Richard T. Moore</li> <li>● Sandy Alissa Novack, MSW, MBA</li> <li>● SeniorCare, Scott Trenti, CEO</li> </ul>

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