



# Dignity Votes 2022

A Dignity Alliance Massachusetts Initiative

Through the Dignity Votes 2022 initiative, Dignity Alliance Massachusetts has invited candidates for legislative office to respond to a set of questions drafted specifically for the office. Dignity Alliance Massachusetts is a state-wide coalition of aging and disability service and advocacy organizations and supporters dedicated to the systemic transformation of long-term services, support, and care to ensure the dignity of older adults, people with disabilities, and caregivers.

## Candidate Response – Shawn Dooley (R) Candidate for the Senate (Norfolk, Worcester & Middlesex District)

**Question 1.** Most Massachusetts residents know someone who has needed long-term services or care due to issues related to aging or disabilities or experienced it themselves.

*Has anyone close to you needed nursing home care, congregate living arrangements, or home and community-based services, such as personal care assistants (PCAs)? What implications for public policy and regulatory enforcement do you draw from this experience?*

**Response to Q1:** Yes, both of my grandmothers were in nursing homes (assisted living facility). And the experiences were quite different. My fraternal grandmother received excellent care from long term staffing who engaged with her and worked to develop programming to keep her and the other residents happy and occupied. My maternal grandmother had a steady stream of new care providers who were doing the bare minimum required. The reality is the focus needs to be in helping these facilities attract and retain high quality staffing and skilled nursing. We also need to work with these facilities to ensure that they are provided with the resources and support to maintain ongoing training to provide proper care.

**Question 2.** Please indicate the importance of addressing these issues regarding the provision of care and services to older adults and persons with disabilities.

**Response to Q2:**

**Most important:**

- Improving quality of care in nursing homes
- Expanding home and community-based services
- Developing affordable, accessible housing
- Expanding availability of behavioral health services for older adults and persons with disabilities
- Increasing pay and benefits for direct care workers
- Paying spouses as caregivers
- Updating nursing home resident bill of rights

**Important:**

- Conducting comprehensive financial audits of nursing homes
- Transformation of nursing home operations (e.g., single room occupancy, smaller units; smaller facilities)
- Increasing availability of accessible transportation

**Desirable, but not priority**

- Ensuring transparency of nursing home ownership
- Adopting supported decision making as an alternative to guardianship

**Question 3: Are there other issues / opportunities to be addressed?**

**Response to Q3:** I was glad you had a mental health component to your questionnaire. I think this is an area that needs to get a great deal more attention and resources.

**Brief profile of Shawn Dooley:**

Shawn Dooley was elected to the House of Representatives in a 2014 special election. He serves as the ranking member on the Joint Committee on Financial Services; the Joint Committee on Public Health; the Joint Committee on Election Laws; the House Committee on Federal Stimulus and Census Oversight; and Special Joint Committee on Redistricting. He selected by the Chief Justice of the Trial Court to serve as the non-attorney member on the Child Support Guidelines Task Force .

[www.Dooley4senate.com](http://www.Dooley4senate.com)

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**Dignity Alliance Massachusetts** is a state-wide, grass-roots coalition of aging and disability service and advocacy organizations and supporters dedicated to systemic transformation to ensure the dignity of older adults, people with disabilities, and caregivers. We are committed to advancing new ways of providing long-term services, support, living options, and care while respecting choice and self-determination. Dignity Alliance works through education, legislation, regulatory reform, and legal strategies to realize this vision throughout the Commonwealth.