



Legislative Champions of Dignity and Care - 2024

Tuesday, October 1, 2024 10:45 a.m. State House, Boston - Room 428

Dignity Alliance Massachusetts honors Legislators and Legislative Staff for their exemplary public service to address the needs and concerns of older adults, people with disabilities and their caregivers during the 193rd sitting of the Massachusetts General Court

Introductory Comments – Paul J. Lanzikos, Coordinator

DignityMA Priorities for 2025:

- *Resident Rights*
 - Nursing Homes*
 - Assisted Living Residences*
- *Raise the Personal Needs Allowance for Nursing Home Residents*
- *Implementing “Bringing People Home” – settlement agreement to the Marsters v. Healey class action lawsuit*

Presentation of Awards: Presiding, Richard T. Moore, Legislative Chair

- *Legislator Champions of Dignity and Care*
 - Senator Joan Lovely**, presented by Senator Patricia Jehlen
 - Representative Thomas Stanley**, presented by Representative Ruth Balsler
- *Legislative Career Champions of Dignity and Care*
 - Senator Marc Pacheco**
 - Representative Ruth Balsler**
 - Representative Denise Garlick**
 - Representative Kay Khan**
- *Special thanks for leadership on the passage of Chapter 197 of the Acts of 2024*
 - Senator Patricia Jehlen**
- *Legislative Staff Champions of Dignity and Care*
 - Brian Rosman** – Career Recognition
 - Senate Staff Members**
 - Gabe Adams-Keane**
 - Victoria Halal**
 - Mary Anne Padien**
 - House Staff Members**
 - Whitney Ferguson**
 - Dmitriy Gridnev**

Mark Phillips

Closing Remarks – Barbara L'Italien

2024 DignityMA House Champion of Dignity and Care

Senator Joan B. Lovely



Senator Joan Lovely is in her fifth term as State Senator for the Second Essex District, comprised of Beverly, Danvers, Peabody, Salem, and Topsfield. Senator Lovely has been serving in the Massachusetts Senate since January 2013.

Senator Lovely has sponsored many bills of interest to older adults and persons with disabilities including supportive decision making, increase in the personal needs allowance for nursing home residents, the treatment of intellectually and developmentally disabled offenders in the criminal justice system, expanding the availability of personal care homes for older adults, disclosing continuing care retirement community entrance fees, ensuring dependent health coverage for adults with disabilities, mental health parity for disability policies, and more.

After raising a family in Salem with her husband, Senator Lovely went back to school to earn degrees from Salem State University and the Massachusetts School of Law. She began her activism at the local level when she collaborated with neighbors and volunteers to rebuild a local playground for children and families in Salem.

Currently in her fifth term, Senator Lovely serves in Leadership as Assistant Majority Leader and the Chair on the Senate Committee on Rules. In addition, Senator Lovely serves as the Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on Rules; and Vice Chair of the Senate Committee on Bills in the Third Reading. Senator Lovely also serves as a member on the Joint Committee on Housing, and Senate Committees on Steering and Policy, Global Warming and Climate Change, and Reimagining Massachusetts Post-Pandemic Resiliency.

Senator Lovely is the proud parent of three children and 1 granddaughter, and currently resides in Salem with her husband, Stephen. She also enjoys her 4 labs, 1 cat, 2 chickens, and 5 ducks, perennial blue- ribbon winners at the Topsfield Fair.

**2024 DignityMA House Champion of Dignity and Care
Representative Thomas M. Stanley**



Representative Thomas Stanley has represented residents of the City of Waltham since 2001.

Representative Stanley was a principal sponsor of the legislation that was enacted into the milestone law known as Chapter 197 of the General Acts of 2024, *An Act relative to Quality and Oversight of Long-Term Care and Assisted Living*. He has sponsored many bills of interest to older adults including the development of a curriculum to support seniors' financial literacy, the creation of safe environments for home care workers and consumers, research about a statewide long-term care insurance program, and the promotion of innovations in elder care nursing facilities and services.

He has been active in civic life in Waltham. Since 1997, he has served as a member of the Waltham City Council. He is also a member of the Warrendale Little League Board of Directors, the Waltham Partnership for Youth Board of Directors, the Waltham Family School Advisory Board, and the Waltham Community Day Center (for Homeless) to name a few. Tom is also a member of the Lions Club, the Friends of the Waltham Family School, and the Safe & Healthy Schools YRBS Steering Committee.

He earned a Master's in Public Administration from Suffolk University's Graduate School of Management. He also has a BS in Management from Bentley University and an Associate's Degree in Business Administration from Mass Bay Community College.

He has received awards from a number of organizations including Minuteman Senior Services and the Boston Bar Association.

Representative Stanley is a lifelong resident of Waltham. He and his wife, Kim Bayliss, have two sons and their rescue puppy Regan, a Catahoula Leopard Dog.

Retiring Legislative DignityMA Champions of Dignity and Care



Brian Rosman, Legislative Director, Office of Senator Jo Comerford

Brian Rosman served 5½ years as Legislative Director for Senator Jo Comerford (D-Northampton) retiring in August 2024.

He had a key staff role in an array of legislation to advance dignity and equity for older adults, people with disabilities, and their caregivers. Capping his tenure was the enactment of Chapter 197 of the Acts of 2024, the omnibus Long-Term Care legislation, which included legislation filed by Senator Comerford to end MassHealth’s practice of “estate recovery,” the policy that required the heirs of seniors and people in the CommonHealth program to repay the state for the value of the Medicaid health care benefits used once turning age 55.

Brian responded to the question, What is your motivation to be a legislative aide?

I have seen again and again how our state policy can not only make real change for real people in Massachusetts but be a template for national initiatives. States like Massachusetts can lead the way in advancing compassionate policy that promotes progress and supports community and equity. Working in the state legislature has allowed me to move my values forward and watch those contributions bear broader fruit.

He was a senior staffer in the Massachusetts State House from 1989-1993 and 1995-1998, serving the Senate Ways and Means and Joint Health Care committees, where he led efforts to expand Medicaid to low-income children, the model for the federal CHIP law, and legislation to reform the hospital free care system.

Brian has a law degree from the University of Pennsylvania and a BA from Stanford University. He grew up in Tucson, Arizona. He and his wife, Rabbi Barbara Penzner, have two grandchildren.



Senator Marc R. Pacheco

Senator Marc Pacheco has been the Senator from the 3rd Bristol & Plymouth since 1993.

As the longest serving Senator, he is the Dean of the Senate. Senator Pacheco currently serves as the Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Post Audit & Oversight, the Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on Emergency Preparedness & Management. He holds a Master’s in Public Administration from Suffolk University, a BS in Human Services from New Hampshire College, and an AS in Agronomy from the University of MA,’s Stockbridge School of Agriculture.

He has been a leading advocate regarding many nursing home related bills throughout his legislative tenure.



Representative Ruth B. Balsler

Representative Ruth Balsler has represented residents of the City of Newton and the Town of Brookline since 1999. She is currently Chair of the Third Division.

She is a member of the House Committees on Ethics and on Rules and the Joint Committee on Rules. She holds a Ph.D. in Psychology from New York University.

She has sponsored many bills regarding nursing homes, mental health, and persons who are incarcerated including the overuse of temporary nursing service agencies at Massachusetts skilled nursing facilities, provision of medication for addiction treatment to certain incarcerated persons, and the licensing of “senior” psychologists. She was recognized as DignityMA Champion of Dignity and Care in 2023.



Representative Denise C. Garlick

Representative Denise Garlick has represented residents of the Towns of Dover, Medfield, and Needham since 2011.

She is the House Chairperson of the Joint Committee on Education.

She is a graduate of the New England Baptist Hospital School of Nursing and has a BSN from Fitchburg State College.

She has sponsored many bills advancing health care and educational services. Specific bills include the protection of medically fragile children and strengthening the public health infrastructure to address Alzheimer’s Disease and dementia.



Representative Kay Khan

Representative Kay Khan has represented residents of the City of Newton since 1995.

She serves on the Joint Committee on Public Health and the House Committees on Post Audit and Oversight and on Steering, Policy and Scheduling.

She has B.S. and M.S. degrees in nursing from Boston University and is a psychiatric nurse specialist.

She has sponsored many bills advancing health care and mental health initiatives. Specific bills include contracts for continuing care retirement communities, ensuring access to polling places for voters with disabilities, and establishing livable wage for human services workers.

2024 DignityMA Champions of Dignity and Care

House of Representative Staff Members



Whitney Ferguson

Deputy Chief of Staff
Office of House Speaker Ronald
Mariano

Tenure: 11 years

BA, American Studies and Art History,
Trinity College

MS, Communications, Boston
University

Motivation: to ensure the development
of comprehensive and politically-
tenable policy solutions with a focus
on social justice, education,
healthcare, transportation, and
economic development.

Dmitriy Gridnev

Staff Director
Office of Representative Ruth B.
Balsler

Tenure: 9.5 years

BA, Political Science, Suffolk
University

Social Impact MBA, Boston University

Motivation: Being able to walk past
someone's home that I helped
connect to services or to bike
through a park I helped get funding
to maintain, makes the connection
between my work and my impact
tangible and personal.



Mark Phillips

Staff Director
Office of Representative Thomas M.
Stanley

Tenure: 3 years

BA, Government and Legal Studies,
Bowdoin College

MPP, Northeastern University

Motivation: Desire to be in public
service, research public policy, and
help constituents.



2024 DignityMA Champions of Dignity and Care

Senate Staff Members

Gabe Adams-Keane

Chief of Staff
Office of Senator John Velis
Tenure: 4 years
Master of Public Policy and Administration,
UMass Amherst
Motivation: Gabe is passionate about working closely with community members, advocates, and colleagues to achieve effective and efficient statewide legislation.



Vicki Halal

Senior Policy Director
Office of Senator Patricia Jehlen
Tenure: 17 years
BA, Literature, Boston University
MA, Applied Linguistics, UMass Boston
Motivation: Forging a new path of advocacy toward positive change. It has always been worth getting good bills over the finish line

Mary Anne Padien

Chief of Staff
Office of Senate President Karen Spilka
Tenure: 19 years with Senator Spilka
9 years with former Senator David Magnani
BA, Boston College
JD, Boston University
Motivation: To participate in exciting policy work



The artwork presented today has been donated by the following artists who are associated with Councils on Aging throughout the Commonwealth. We celebrate their artistry and thank them for their generosity.

Bridgewater Council on Aging

William Labossiere

Gloucester Council on Aging

To be inserted

Williamstown Council on Aging

Ghetta Hirsch

Worcester Council on Aging

Elio Sonsini



Dignity Alliance Massachusetts is a voluntary statewide coalition of advocacy organizations and individuals who support efforts to help older adults and people with disabilities live with dignity in Massachusetts. DignityMA actively advocates for a comprehensive, systemic restructuring of institutional care --- transformational change to the underlying model of facility-based long-term care, including facility operations, and significant enhancement of public policies that support home and community-based options. Participants include aging and disability service and advocacy organizations, individual advocates, policymakers, legal service organizations and attorneys, service recipients, and other interested persons.

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