



MCOA Fall Conference 2024



Dignity
Alliance
Massachusetts



You've Got the Power:
*An Advocate's Guide to
Shaping Public Policy*



Presenters

- **Former State Senator Richard Moore**
Chair, DignityMA Legislative Workgroup
- **Former Elder Affairs Secretary Paul Lanzikos**
Chair, DignityMA Coordinator Committee



Agenda

- **What is advocacy**
- **Dignity Alliance Massachusetts:
Grass Roots Advocacy in Action**
- **Under the Golden Dome:**
 - **How an idea becomes law**
 - **The Budget Process**
- **Basic concepts of effective advocacy**
- **Questions and comments**

What is Advocacy?



The process of **stakeholders making their voices heard** on issues that affect their lives and the lives of others at the local, state, and national level.

Influences public policy by providing a conduit for individuals and organizations to voice an opinion.

Help policymakers find specific solutions to persistent problems. Most nonprofits can and do engage in as much advocacy as possible to achieve their goals.

Sway public opinion, garner press coverage, and provide policymakers an opportunity to respond to constituents' needs.

Why Advocacy Is Critical for COAs

- Most funding is from **public sources**
- Can't assume that **policymakers know** all about your purpose and programming
- **Can't just connect** when asking for something
- Decision makers face **competing valid budget priorities**
- The **"Tom Sawyer"** principle

- How it started
- It's mission
- It's participants
- How it functions
- It's impact
- The ongoing agenda



*Dignity Alliance
Massachusetts:
A grass roots example*

How a bill becomes a law

- An **idea** is proposed.
- A bill is **drafted**.
- A legislative **sponsor** introduces the bill.
- The bill is assigned to a **committee**.
- The committee holds a **hearing**.
- The bill is referred to a chamber and **voted on**.
- The bill is sent to the **other chamber** for a vote.
- If differences, referred to a **Conference Committee**.
- With final agreement, bill sent to **Governor** for signature, amendment, or veto.

The budget process



SEP- DEC

- Spending plan submission
- Budget hearings
- Gov. reviews recommendations

JAN-APR

- Governor submits proposal
- Joint W&M Committee public hearings
- House W&M releases proposal in April
- House considers budget

MAY- AUG

- Senate W&M releases proposal in May
- Senate considers budget
- Conference Committee appointed to resolve differences between
House and Senate budgets
- Conference Budget released
- Governor signs/vetoes
- 2/3 vote in each chamber for override
veto

5 Keys to Successful Advocacy



- **Build Relationships**
- **Share Stories**
- **Include Data (when available)**
- **Keep it Simple (and Relatable)**
- **Say Thank you!**

Advocacy Actions



- **In-Person**
 - Open Houses
 - Community Events
- **Letter Writing**
 - Mail
 - Email
- **Phone Calls**
- **Newsletter**
- **Press**
 - Letters to the Editor
 - Stories in Local Papers
 - Connect Media to Leads for Stories
- **Social Media**
 - Twitter
 - Facebook
 - Instagram
 - Webpage



Questions

Comments



Thank you

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