



IN SUPPORT OF THE FOLLOWING BILLS:

April 14, 2025 - Dignity Alliance Massachusetts, advocating for older adults, people with disabilities, and their caregivers welcomes the opportunity to testify in support of the following measures and urges the Committee on Aging and Independence to favorably report on each bill, with only technical amendments in several instances.

S470/H789 -An Act to improve Massachusetts Home Care.

The bills establish licensing and standards for home care agencies, oversight, and accountability of owners, operators and staff. The bill needs to be amended in lines 113, 233, 248 to replace “elder affairs,” with “aging and independence. The proposed reforms are essential to protect consumers and caregivers in home care and to provide accountability, transparency and appropriate oversight.

Dignity Alliance urges prompt favorable action by this Committee and the Legislature!

Dignity Alliance also takes this opportunity to suggest that both the current and proposed state budget substantially underfund the home care account, and we have communicated this to both the Administration and the Joint Committee on Ways and Means. We support the corrective action taken to the FY’25 budget in H.4003.¹ However, this also needs to be addressed in the FY’26 budget. Lack of adequate funding for home care services and supports risks weakening the benefits that could be achieved through enactment of S470/H789, and would lead to unfair wait lists for services.

Dignity Alliance respectfully notes that failure to adequately fund home care along with failure to enact the positive steps incorporated in this legislation will result in many older adults being forced to enter nursing homes, and the cost to the taxpayers will prove significantly more than nursing home care. Such failure will also challenge the ability of the Commonwealth to reduce the nursing

¹ [Healey-Driscoll Administration Files \\$756 Million Supplemental Budget for Fiscal Year 2025 | Mass.gov](#)

home census by help older adults to return to their communities as required by the settlement of *Marsters v. Healey*. (Case 1:22-cv-11715-NMG Document 129 Filed 09/20/23)

S473/H778 -An Act relative to the commission on LGBTQ aging.

The bills create a permanent commission on older gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning adults and their caregivers. The bills need to be amended in lines 6 and 8 to replace “elder affairs” with “aging and independence.” This bill is important in view of the potential for discrimination against older adults who, because of their treatment when younger, often do not have the support network that exists for younger adults today. It is vital that Massachusetts takes action to protect this segment of our older adult population in view some external threats such as the federal government’s elimination and reorganization of the Administration for Community Living, for example. With regard to this legislation, it should be noted that, according an article by Kay Lazar in the *Boston Globe* (3/23/2025)² the state is not tracking compliance with Mass. General Laws c.111 § 72GG, Prohibiting discrimination against residents on the basis of gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, intersex status, or HIV status; long-term care facilities; notice; care for transgender residents; LGBTQI inclusion in programming; rules and regulations; training, Perhaps this bill should be amended requiring DPH to report annually on compliance to this committee and the committees on Ways and Means.

S471/H777 -An Act supporting seniors’ financial stability.

The bills require the State Treasurer to establish a program for financial education for older adults and periodically update. Needs to be amended in line 5 to replace “elder affairs” with “aging and independence” Older-adults are frequent targets of scammers and many do not have the life experience important to manage personal finances as they age. According to the FBI-Boston, criminal "actors" target **older** adults, who are **vulnerable**, trusting, and have a good amount of **financial** savings. "They also assume **seniors** own real estate, have good credit, and are less likely to report **fraud**," according to a statement from the FBI-Boston.

Last year, Channel 25 News reported: The cybersecurity website [VPNPro](#) analyzed 2022 fraud data from the FBI and FTC and found Massachusetts had a total of 1,653 fraud victims over the age of 60 with an average loss of \$42,408 lost per victim. “The number of home [computers], especially ones with older users, that don’t have anti-virus [software] is significant,” said Blue Mantis cybersecurity consultant Rob Fitzgerald. [Seniors] might ask, ‘Why would they want me?’ Well, they want you for your 401k, real estate trust or social security check.” The company found people aged 60 and older were 517 percent more likely to be victims of an online tech support scam than those aged between 18 and 59. The most successful types of fraud involved investment scams, business imposter scams and romance scams, VPNPro found.³

S487/H765 -An Act relative to councils on aging.

² [Is Massachusetts' pioneering LGBTQ care law working?](#)

³ [Report: Massachusetts seniors lost \\$70 million to fraud in one year – Boston 25 News](#)

The bills update terms and clarifies that the director hires needed staff, council is advisory, an issue that has undermined the important work of aging services professionals. The terms recommended in the proposed bills more accurately describe the role of councils on aging today.

According to *Aging Matters Newsletter*, (3/21/2025) In the bustling heart of any community, there lies a network of support, a lifeline for those navigating the complexities of aging and life's challenges. At the Council on Aging (COA), social services play a pivotal role, weaving together resources and compassion to uplift lives.⁴ Dignity Alliance supports efforts to strengthen to work of this important aspect of local government.

S484 – An Act relative to reserving beds in nursing homes during certain leaves of absence.

The bill makes permanent the right of residents to take leaves of absence from a nursing home for health and personal reasons. Currently, the Legislature needs to include the leave of absence in the annual budget. This bill will bring the executive branch into harmony with the legislature demonstrating that both support this important right for older adults in nursing homes so that the leave will be factored into budget development from the outset of the process.

In a 2007 study in *Pub Med* co-authored by Harvard's David Grabowski, who has been an important resource for the Massachusetts legislature, it was noted that: "Bed-hold policies pay nursing homes to reserve the bed of acutely hospitalized residents, and vary across states in the proportion of the average Medicaid daily rate paid for bed-hold, and the number of days covered. Some states also require a minimum facility occupancy rate to qualify for bed-hold payments. The goal of bed-hold is to provide a continuous place of residence for the nursing home resident. In the absence of a bed-hold policy, some residents may refuse hospitalization to avoid loss of their bed (Nohlgren 2004)."⁵

Dignity Alliance Massachusetts is dedicated to transformative change to ensure the dignity of older adults, people with disabilities, and their caregivers. We are committed to advancing new ways of providing long-term services, support, living options, and care, while respecting choice and self-determination. Through education, legislation, regulatory reform, and legal strategies, this mission will become reality throughout the Commonwealth. As a non-profit, all-volunteer, grass-roots coalition of aging and disability service and advocacy organizations and supporters, Dignity Alliance Massachusetts works to secure fundamental change. For more information on the "Dignity Dozen +1" 2025-2026 Legislative package, contact Former Senator Richard T. Moore, Legislative Chair, at rmoore8743@charter.net or visit the Dignity Alliance web site. info@dignityAllianceMA.org

⁴ [The Heartbeat of Community: Uplifting Lives Through Council on Aging Social Services | Massachusetts Councils on Aging](#)

⁵ [Hospitalization of Nursing Home Residents: The Effects of States' Medicaid Payment and Bed-Hold Policies - PMC](#)