

Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress State Legislative Priorities



For the 194th Session of the General Court
2025-2026

Recommended by the
MDSC Government Affairs Committee

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MASSACHUSETTS DOWN SYNDROME CONGRESS PRIORITY BILL

[HB.2104](#) / [SB.1325](#) – *An Act Relative to Meeting Human Service Demand by Modernizing Incentives for the Direct Care Workforce*

- **Sponsors:**
 - **HB. 2104:** Representative Sean Garballey and Simon Cataldo
 - **SB. 1325:** Senator Paul Feeney
- **Committee:** Joint Committee on Labor and Workforce Development
- **Summary:** This bill aims to address the critical shortage of direct care workers in Massachusetts by establishing wage standards that reflect the 75th percentile of comparable occupations, as determined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The legislation specifies that salary increases apply to direct care staff, direct support professionals, and other personnel categories such as front-line supervisors, directors, and clinicians, excluding top-level executives like CEOs and CFOs. The goal is to enhance recruitment and retention in the human services sector by offering competitive compensation

MASSACHUSETTS DOWN SYNDROME CONGRESS SUPPORT BILLS

Education

(new) [HB.650](#) / [SB.436](#) – *An Act Relative to Affirming and Maintaining Equal Access to Public Education for All Children*

- **Sponsors:**
 - **HB.650:** Representatives Frank A. Moran and Alice Hanlon Peisch
 - **SB.436:** Senator Pavel M. Payano
- **Committee:** Joint Committee on Education
- **Summary:** This bill ensures that evaluations and assessments for students are administered in their primary language. The aim is to ensure an accurate representation of the child's academic, developmental, and functional abilities - supporting equity and inclusivity in the education system.

[HB.514](#) / [SB.418](#) – *An Act to Improve Augmentative and Alternative Communication Opportunities for Children with Disabilities*

- **Sponsors:**
 - **HB.514:** Representative Christine P. Barber
 - **SB.418:** Senator Patrick O'Connor
- **Committee:** Joint Committee on Education
- **Summary:** This bill aims to enhance communication opportunities for children with disabilities by improving access to augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) methods

HB.520 / SB.320 – *An Act Relative to the Training, Assessment, and Assignment of Qualified School Interpreters in Educational Settings*

- **Sponsors:**
 - **HB.520:** Representative Antonio FD Cabral
 - **SB.320:** Senator Brendan Crighton
- **Committee:** Joint Committee on Education
- **Summary:** This legislation seeks to establish standards for the training, assessment, and assignment of qualified interpreters in educational settings to ensure effective communication for students requiring such services.

HB.546 / SB.317 – *An Act to Ensure Equitable Access to Education, Including Special Education Services, for All Students in Massachusetts*

- **Sponsors:**
 - **HB.546:** Representative Marjorie C. Decker
 - **SB.317:** Senator Cynthia Stone Creem
- **Committee:** Joint Committee on Education
- **Summary:** This bill aims to guarantee that all students in Massachusetts have equitable access to education, with a focus on enhancing special education services to meet diverse student needs.

Safety

(new) HB.2657 – *An Act Establishing a Purple Alert System in the Commonwealth*

- **Sponsor:** Representative Jack Lewis
- **Committee:** Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security
- **Summary:** This bill proposes the creation of a Purple Alert system in Massachusetts, designed to assist in locating missing individuals with certain disabilities. Specifically, it aims to establish a framework for the rapid dissemination of information regarding missing persons who have specific mental, cognitive, intellectual, developmental, or physical disabilities. The system would function similarly to existing alert systems like Amber or Silver Alerts, facilitating swift community and law enforcement responses to ensure the safety and quick recovery of these individuals.

HB.243 / SB.139 – *An Act Updating Terminology and Investigative Practices Related to the Protection of Persons with Disabilities*

- **Sponsors:**
 - **HB.243:** Representative Sean Garballey and Simon Cataldo
 - **SB.139:** Senator John F. Keenan
 - **Committee:** Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities
 - **Summary:** This legislation proposes updates to the terminology and investigative procedures used in protecting individuals with disabilities, aiming to modernize and improve the effectiveness of such practices.
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Medical

HB.242 / SB.149 – *An Act to Enhance Standards of Care For Those with Autism and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*

- **Sponsors:**
 - **HB.242:** Representatives Sean Garballey and Christine P. Barber
 - **SB.149:** Senator Jason M. Lewis
- **Committee:** Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities
- **Summary:** This bill seeks to improve the standards of care provided to individuals with autism and intellectual and developmental disabilities by enhancing provider education and treatment protocols

HB.1360 / SB.869 – *An Act Relative to Preventing Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities in the Provision of Health Care*

- **Sponsors:**
 - **HB.1360:** Representatives Mindy Domb and Vanna Howard
 - **SB.869:** Senator Adam Gomez
- **Committee:** Joint Committee on Health Care Financing
- **Summary:** This legislation aims to prevent discrimination against individuals with disabilities in healthcare settings by addressing biases and ensuring equitable treatment

HB.2410 / SB.1569 – *An Act to Improve Oral Health for All Massachusetts Residents*

- **Sponsors:**
 - **HB.2410:** Representative Patricia A. Duffy
 - **SB.1569:** Senator Jason M. Lewis
- **Committee:** Joint Committee on Public Health
- **Summary:** This bill proposes measures to expand access to oral health care across Massachusetts, aiming to improve overall public health outcomes

SB.866 – *An Act to Protect Medically Fragile Kids*

- **Sponsor:** Senator Cindy F. Friedman
- **Committee:** Joint Committee on Health Care Financing
- **Summary:** This legislation focuses on safeguarding medically fragile children by ensuring they receive appropriate care and protections within the healthcare system.

HB.1351 / SB.871 – *An Act Ensuring Equal Access to Medical Treatments Essential for People with a Developmental Disability, Intellectual Disability, or Autism*

- **Sponsors:**
 - **HB.1351:** Representative Christine P. Barber
 - **SB.871:** Senator John F. Keenan
- **Committee:** Joint Committee on Health Care Financing
- **Summary:** This bill aims to ensure that individuals with developmental or intellectual disabilities, including autism, have equal access to essential medical treatments.

Transition

(new) [HB.752](#) / [SB.313](#) – *An Act Strengthening Transitional Planning and Increasing Accountability for Persons with Disabilities and Their Families*

- **Sponsors:**
 - **HB.752:** Representative Susannah M. Whipps
 - **SB.313:** Senator Joanne M. Comerford
- **Committee:** Joint Committee on Education
- **Summary:** This bill aims to improve transitional planning for individuals with disabilities approaching the age of 22, ensuring they receive appropriate services and supports as they transition from school to adult life. It proposes the establishment of a special commission to study and review current practices and identify gaps in services for these individuals and their families.

(new) [HB.1481](#) / [SB.1004](#) – *An Act to Create Affordable Homes for Persons with Disabilities*

- **Sponsors:**
 - **HB.1481:** Representatives Rob Consalvo and Marjorie Decker
 - **SB.1004:** Senator Robyn Kennedy
- **Committee:** Joint Committee on Housing
- **Summary:** This bill seeks to improve the Affordable Housing Voucher Program (AHVP), a state-run initiative that helps adults with disabilities afford housing. Many individuals with disabilities lack sufficient income to cover rent, and this legislation would streamline access to rental assistance while also enhancing the capacity of housing authorities to support individuals with disabilities in securing stable, safe homes.

[HB.277](#) / [SB.153](#) – *An Act Relative to Cueing and Supervision in the Personal Care Attendant (PCA) Program*

- **Sponsors:**
 - **HB.277:** Representative James J. O'Day
 - **SB.153:** Senator Joan B. Lovely
- **Committee:** Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities
- **Summary:** This bill proposes expanding eligibility for the PCA program to include individuals who require supervision and "cueing" to perform two or more activities of daily living, ensuring they receive necessary support

[HB.261](#) / [SB.155](#) – *An Act Relative to Authorizing Supported Decision-Making Agreements for Certain Adults*

- **Sponsors:**
 - **HB.261:** Representatives Jay D. Livingstone and Michael J. Finn
 - **SB.155:** Senator Joan B. Lovely
- **Committee:** Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities
- **Summary:** This legislation seeks to establish a legal framework for supported decision-making agreements, allowing adults with disabilities to designate trusted individuals to assist them in making decisions, thereby promoting autonomy and reducing reliance on guardianship.

Human Services Workforce

[HB.1394](#) / [SB.886](#) – *An Act Relative to Family Members Serving as Caregivers*

- **Sponsors:**
 - **HB.1394:** Representative James J. O'Day
 - **SB.886:** Senator Joan B. Lovely
- **Committee:** Joint Committee on Health Care Financing
- **Summary:** This bill proposes allowing legally liable family members, such as parents and adult children, to serve as paid caregivers under MassHealth's home and community-based services, expanding the pool of eligible caregivers.

[HB.283](#) / [SB.119](#) – *An Act Relative to / Establishing a Loan Repayment Program for Human Service Workers*

- **Sponsors:**
 - **HB.283:** Representatives Jeffrey N. Roy and Sean Garballey
 - **SB.119:** Senator Sal N. DiDomenico
- **Committee:** Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities
- **Summary:** This legislation seeks to establish a student loan repayment assistance program for human services workers, aiming to aid in recruitment and retention within the sector.

[HB.223](#) / [SB.130](#) – *An Act Relative to a Livable Wage for Human Services Workers*

- **Sponsors:**
 - **HB.223:** Representative Mindy Domb
 - **SB.130:** Senator Cindy F. Friedman
- **Committee:** Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities
- **Summary:** This bill aims to eliminate the pay disparity between state-employed human services workers and those employed by private, community-based nonprofits by setting a schedule to achieve wage parity by July 1, 2029.

General

(new) [HB.256](#) / [SB.102](#) – *An Act Requiring Universal Changing Stations in Public Buildings*

- **Sponsors:**
 - **HB.256:** Representatives John J. Lawn, Jr. and Sean Garballey
 - **SB.102:** Senator Michael J. Barrett
- **Committee:** Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities
- **Summary:** This legislation mandates that at least one universal changing station be installed and maintained in newly constructed, reconstructed, or remodeled state-owned public buildings or public accommodations with restrooms beginning January 1, 2027. The goal is to ensure dignity and accessibility for individuals with disabilities who require personal care in public spaces.

HB.276 / SB.150 – *An Act Relative to Persons with Developmental Disabilities*

- **Sponsors:**
 - **HB.276:** Representative James J. O'Day
 - **SB.150:** Senator Joan B. Lovely
- **Committee:** Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities
- **Summary:** This bill seeks to update and clarify the legal definition of a "person with a developmental disability" in Massachusetts law by expanding the criteria.

HB.232 / SB.137 – *An Act Relative to Individuals with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities / An Act Dignifying Individuals with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities*

- **Sponsors:**
 - **HB.232:** Representatives Michael J. Finn and Sean Garballey
 - **SB.137:** Senator Patricia D. Jehlen
- **Committee:** Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities
- **Summary:** This bill seeks to update language in state laws to use respectful and person-first terminology when referring to individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities, promoting dignity and inclusion.

HB.3335 / SB.2102 – *An Act Relating to Public Access to Historical Records*

- **Sponsors:**
 - **HB.3335:** Representatives Sean Garballey and Mindy Domb
 - **SB.2102:** Senator Michael J. Barrett
- **Committee:** Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight
- **Summary:** This legislation mandates that records from state institutions for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities or mental health conditions be open to public inspection 75 years after their creation, enhancing transparency and historical research.

SB.1733 – *An Act Building a More Accessible Massachusetts*

- **Sponsor:** Senator Michael O. Moore
- **Committee:** Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security
- **Summary:** This bill proposes expanding accessibility requirements for multiple dwellings and public buildings, mandating that 5-10% of residential units be accessible and updating language throughout the law to use respectful terms like "persons with a disability."