



MDDC Disability Policy Work

2025-2026 Endorsed Legislation

Background

Each legislative session, the MDDC selects bills introduced in the Massachusetts legislature that aim to better the lives of people with developmental disabilities (PWDDs.) We also serve as an objective resource to policymakers and provide information about how policies impact the lives of PWDDs. Citizen Members have opportunities to share their lived experiences with lawmakers, participate in advocacy engagement activities, and present testimony at the State House and/or on Capitol Hill in Washington DC.



Community Inclusion & Participation

S.101 – An Act to require closed captioning in telecommunications in public areas.

This bill mandates that public establishments provide accommodations of closed captioning (CC) on televisions that have CC capability during regular hours. *Senator Barrett.*

H.602 – An Act concerning athletic activities of students with disabilities. This aims to establish “Unified Sports Program” that are designed to combine groups of students with and without disabilities together. This would ensure that students with disabilities have the same chance to participate in physical education and try out for school sports programs with reasonable accommodations and supports to participate the most that they can. *Representative Honan.*

History & Transparency

S.2102 – An Act relating to public access to historical records. This bill requires that all records from state institutions for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities or mental health conditions be open to the public for inspection. This includes permission to copy the record when it's been 75 years since the record was originally created. *Senator Barrett.*

H.232/S.137 – An Act dignifying individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities. This bill shifts the language throughout multiple sections of the Massachusetts General Laws to use more up to date and respectful terminology and language that relate to individuals with disabilities. It replaces terms such as “handicapped,” “disabled,” and “the R word” with more accurate designations like “persons with disabilities,” “persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities,” and more. *Representatives Finn and Garballey and Senator Jehlen.*

Amended 6/11/2025. Subject to change.

Safety & Violence Prevention

H.3655/S.2348 – An Act facilitating better interactions between police officers and persons with autism spectrum disorder (a.k.a., The Blue Envelope Bill). This bill aims to make interactions between people with autism and police officers safer.

Representative Garballey and Senator Comerford.

H.243/S.139 – An Act updating terminology and investigative practices related to the protection of persons with disabilities. The legislature passed Nicky's Law several years ago, creating a registry of individuals who have been found to have abused individuals with IDD. The bill seeks to expand that to MassHealth Day Habilitation programs, where some of the most vulnerable individuals with IDD receive programming and services. The bill also aims to streamline the functions of the Disabled Persons Protection Commission. The language will update and strengthen the abuser registry by aligning it with the regulations of Nicky's Law.

Representatives Garballey and Cataldo, Senator Keenan.

H.2657 – An Act establishing a Purple Alert system in the commonwealth. This aims to establish a Purple Alert program throughout the state that will help when there is a person with a disability who is lost or missing. Sometimes, people with IDD have a tendency to wander or can get lost, and this system would notify the public and law enforcement with descriptions, photographs, and other information about the person with a disability who is missing so that they can be found and helped promptly and safely. *Representative Lewis.*

Healthcare

H.3946 – An Act relative to health insurance coverage for hearing aids. This bill will ensure health insurance companies cover the cost of hearing aids for adults and define them as Durable Medical Equipment. *Representatives Garballey and Giannino.*

H.1351/S.871 – An Act ensuring equal access to medical treatments essential for people with a developmental disability, intellectual disability, or autism. This legislation would require coverage for habilitative and rehabilitative medically necessary treatments for individuals aged 21 and older for people with developmental disability, intellectual disability or autism spectrum disorder. It would also cover both dedicated and non-dedicated augmentative and alternative communication devices and/or tablets. *Representative Barber and Senator Keenan.*

H.282/S.168 – An Act to increase the safety of individuals with disabilities relying on life-support equipment. This legislation would require a hospital discharge plan and review to increase accountability for medical equipment use and monitoring.

Representative Rogers and Senator O'Connor.

H.1198/S.746 – An Act to improve patient access to non-emergency medical transportation.

This legislation would improve patient access to non-emergency medical transportation.

Representative Hunt and Senator Feeney.

Education

H.245 – An Act regarding the use of aversive therapy. This bill prohibits the use of physical pain to change the behavior of a person with a physical, intellectual, or developmental disability. It also prohibits programs treating persons with disabilities from denying them reasonable sleep, food, shelter, bathroom access, and other human needs.

Representative Gregoire.

H.736/S.435 – An Act to establish de-escalation training in student transportation.

This legislation requires training relative to de-escalation tactics approved by the commissioner of education for all school bus operators. If employed, the operator's employer shall pay for the cost of the de-escalation training. *Representative Vargas and Senator Payano.*

Services & Supports

H.4180 – An Act relative to intellectual disabilities for DDS services. This policy would amend the General Laws and shift the eligibility of Developmental Services in the State. It would make it that DDS can't deny a person services on the basis of an IQ test alone but should also take other evaluations into consideration as well. This way, people with developmental disabilities who may have significant needs, but who don't have an intellectual disability, are still able to get the services they need. *Representative Garry.*