

About Massachusetts Attorney General Martha Coakley

Re-elected to her second term as Attorney General in 2010, Martha Coakley has devoted her career to protecting children and public safety, standing up for consumers and taxpayers, and fighting for equality for all. After growing up in North Adams reading Nancy Drew novels and watching Perry Mason, perhaps it's no coincidence that Coakley has charted a career as a distinguished prosecutor on the state and federal levels before serving as Middlesex District Attorney and now as the Commonwealth's first female Attorney General.

Coakley has successfully prosecuted some of the Commonwealth's most dangerous criminals and brought landmark cases to protect consumers, civil rights, and the environment. In all of her roles, Coakley has demonstrated an ability to bring people together around a common goal, a passion to stand up for victims in the face of unfairness, and the vision to achieve innovative solutions to solve problems.

First elected as Attorney General in 2006, Coakley quickly confronted the challenge of addressing the economic crisis that gripped our country shortly thereafter. Under her leadership, the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office became a national leader in holding Wall Street accountable by bringing first-of-their-kind actions against investment giants such as Morgan Stanley and Goldman Sachs. Overall, her office recovered more than \$440 million for Massachusetts homeowners and taxpayers and helped keep more than 15,000 people in their homes.

Coakley has brought a comprehensive, innovative approach to addressing the evolving public safety challenges in the Commonwealth. She opened a state of the art cyber forensics lab and trained over 10,000 local police officers to better combat cyber crimes. She led a 49-state agreement with Facebook and MySpace to ensure age verification and screening tools to better protect children from online predators. Coakley also successfully lobbied for a 2008 law that enhanced penalties for predators who abuse children, and has filed legislation to establish human trafficking as a crime in Massachusetts.

Coakley has vigorously defended the civil rights of Massachusetts residents, working to ensure equal access and opportunity for all. In 2009, her office filed a first-in-the-nation lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), resulting in a federal judge striking down the law for the first time in history. Coakley's office successfully defended a federal court challenge to the constitutionality of the buffer zone to protect the safety of patients and staff at reproductive health facilities. Coakley has also worked diligently to improve access for those with disabilities, reaching innovative agreements with Apple/iTunes and the Commonwealth's three largest movie theater chains to ensure greater accessibility for the hearing and visually impaired.

During these difficult economic times, Coakley has successfully worked to reduce costs for consumers and taxpayers and vigorously prosecuted cases of corruption and fraud. During the 2010 fiscal year alone, her office recovered more than \$660 million for taxpayers based on her office's budget of \$37 million, a better than 17 to 1 ratio. Her office has saved families and businesses hundreds of millions of dollars by challenging utility rate increases, and recovered over \$100 million in Medicaid fraud prosecutions - a record for the office. In 2010, Coakley issued a landmark report on the significant cost drivers of the health care system that has helped steer the debate on solutions to control costs for families and businesses. Coakley has also formed two new divisions, including a Public Integrity Unit, to combat cases of fraud and public corruption in her second term.

Prior to her election as Attorney General, Coakley served for eight years as Middlesex District Attorney, the largest county in the Commonwealth. As DA, Coakley established herself as a passionate advocate for public safety, not only bringing justice to crime victims and their families, but also implementing innovative crime prevention programs in schools and communities. Coakley oversaw the successful prosecution of a number of high profile crimes, including the cases of several Catholic priests charged with sexually abusing children, the conviction of Michael McDermott on seven counts of first degree murder for the workplace massacre at Edgewater Technologies in Wakefield, and the conviction of Thomas Junta for the fatal beating of another parent at a youth hockey practice in Reading.

Coakley previously served as Chief of the Child Abuse Unit at Middlesex. She directed the investigation and prosecution of hundreds of child abuse cases each year and also led the office's innovative efforts to improve interviewing techniques of children. Under her leadership, Middlesex became a national model for prosecuting cases of child abuse, ensuring accuracy of information, and acting in the best interest of the child. Coakley also personally prosecuted many cases of abuse, including the conviction of Louise Woodward for killing eight-month-old Matthew Eappen.

Coakley began her legal career in 1979, practicing civil litigation with the firm Parker, Coulter, Daley & White and later at Goodwin Proctor LLP. She first joined the Middlesex District Attorney's Office in 1986 as an Assistant District Attorney at Lowell District Court. In 1987, Coakley joined the U.S. Justice Department's Organized Crime Strike Force before returning back to the Middlesex District Attorney's Office.

Both during and prior to her tenure in public office, Coakley has been involved in a number of community and professional organizations and boards. She is a former president of the Women's Bar Association of Massachusetts, and has served on the Board of Directors at the Dana Farber Cancer Institute. During her tenure as Middlesex District Attorney, Coakley served as the Chair of the Board of Directors of Middlesex Partnerships for Youth, Inc., a non-profit organization committed to providing prevention and intervention resources and training to Middlesex school districts and communities.

Coakley regularly presents trainings and instruction at conferences and seminars. She also has co-taught a winter study, "Law and Social Policy," at her alma mater, Williams College. Coakley taught writing and criminal trial advocacy courses at the Massachusetts School of Law and the Boston University School of Law.

Coakley has been recognized for her leadership on a number of issues. In 2006, she received the Leadership Award from the Victims' Rights Law Center for her work on behalf of victims of crime. In 2007, the Anti-Defamation League presented her with their Woman of Valor award. In 2010, Coakley was presented with the Presidential Award by the Perkins School for the Blind for her groundbreaking efforts to ensure equal access for those with disabilities.

A native of Western Massachusetts, Coakley's father was a World War II and Korean War veteran and small business owner and her mother was a homemaker. Coakley received her B.A. degree cum laude from Williams College in 1975, and her J.D. from the Boston University School of Law in 1979. Coakley resides in Medford with her husband, retired police Deputy Superintendent Thomas F. O'Connor, Jr. In her spare time, Coakley is an avid reader and enjoys downhill skiing, walking her Labrador Retrievers, Jackson and Beau, and kayaking on the Mystic Lakes.