

James T. Brett
President & CEO
The New England Council
Short Biography

James T. Brett is the President and Chief Executive Officer of The New England Council, the nation's oldest regional business association. Mr. Brett was appointed to this position by the Council's Board of Directors in October 1996.

Under Mr. Brett's leadership, The New England Council has become the region's premier business advocacy and networking association. During his tenure, revenues have grown significantly, membership has increased tenfold, and the organization has expanded its programming to offer upwards of 60 events annually throughout the six New England states and in Washington, DC. The Council is widely respected by business leaders and policymakers alike for its non-partisan, consensus-based approach to policy advocacy. As a result, in recent years, Mr. Brett has led the Council's successful and impactful federal advocacy on a wide range of critical economic issues, including energy, financial services, healthcare, education and workforce development, technology, transportation, trade, and more.

Prior to joining the Council, Mr. Brett served for 15 years as a member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives. During that time, he served as a chairman of several of the most influential committees in the Massachusetts legislature, including the Committee on Banking, the Committee on Taxation, and the Joint Committee on Congressional Redistricting. As a State Representative, Mr. Brett's legislative priorities included providing tax relief for key Massachusetts industries, creating high-wage jobs, developing, and retaining a skilled workforce, and fostering an overall business climate that supports economic growth and prosperity for all residents.

Mr. Brett has been a lifelong champion for people with disabilities. In May 2022, President Joe Biden appointed him to serve as the Chair of the President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities (PCPID) and reappointed him as Chairman in 2023. He previously served on PCPID under Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama, including a term as Chairman from 2011–2013. In 2016, Congress appointed him to the National Council on Disability. He is also currently the Chair of the Governor's Commission on Intellectual Disability, and the Chair of the Massachusetts Disabled Persons Protection Commission. In 2013, the University of Massachusetts Boston established the James T. Brett Chair in Disability and Workforce Development, the nation's only endowed chair in disability and workforce development. In 1996, Bay Cove Human Services of Boston named a new community home for disabled adults "Brett House" in his honor.

Over the course of his career, Mr. Brett has received numerous awards and honors in recognition of his achievements and contributions. Some highlights from recent years include:

- Michael and Kitty Dukakis Lifetime Achievement Award, Massachusetts Association for Mental Health (2018)
- Junior Achievement of Northern New England Hall of Fame (2018)
- Action for Boston Community Development, Inc., Hall of Fame (2016)
- Boston Healthcare for the Homeless Tim Russert Award (2015)

- Special Olympics of Massachusetts Hall of Fame (2014)
- Edward M. Kennedy Leadership Award, Disability Law Center (2014)
- Hospice of Boston Humanitarian of the Year (1989)

Mr. Brett has been named to the *Boston Business Journal's* "50 Most Influential Bostonians" list on several occasions in recent years. He is the recipient of 18 honorary degrees from institutions including Assumption College, Bridgewater State University, University of Massachusetts Boston, Saint Anslem College, Suffolk University and Regis College.

Mr. Brett holds degrees from American University, Suffolk University and Harvard University. He was born and raised in Dorchester, MA where he currently resides with his wife, Patricia. In his spare time, Jim volunteers at the Mary Ann Brett Food Pantry at Saint Teresa Parish, named in memory of his mother.