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FEATURED, NEWS

Scott Brown elected Mass. senator

By: **Matt Rocheleau** | January 20, 2010 |

Courtesy http://www.flickr.com/photos/dr_television/

Republican Sen. Scott Brown claimed a shocking come-from-behind win in Tuesday's Massachusetts special election over Democratic candidate Martha Coakely, who most had believed until recently was a shoe-in for the U.S. Senate seat left vacant by the late Sen. Edward M. Kennedy.

The race began tightening in the final weeks of campaigning as surveys showed Brown had gained significant ground on the state's attorney general, which put a national spotlight on the Jan. 19 election. With Brown's stunning upset in liberal Massachusetts, the Democrats' 60-seat supermajority in the Senate is now gone, meaning Democrats can no longer block Republicans from filibustering Democratic-backed legislation, such as the heavily-debated health care proposal.
Sen. Kennedy had held the Massachusetts Senate seat for 46 years before he died at age 77 in August after a lengthy battle with brain cancer.

Brown nabbed 52 percent of the 2.2 million votes cast – Coakley had 47 percent – to become the first Republican to win a Massachusetts Senate seat since 1972. Before a roaring crowd, he expressed his gratitude to those who voted for him and honored former Sen. Kennedy during his victory speech.

"I will remember that while the honor is mine, this Senate seat belongs to no one person, no one political party," he said, calling his new position, "the people's seat."

"It was all of us against the machine. And tonight, we have shown everybody now that you are the machine," he added.

Coakley addressed and thanked her supporters in a speech after conceding the race last night when Brown's victory had become apparent.

"I wish we were here with other and better news here tonight, but we're not," she said.

"I know we will get up tomorrow and continue this fight," to advance on such issues as healthcare, she added later.

Despite snowy, slushy weather, voter turnout was strong across the Bay State, including in Amherst.

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The town saw nearly 7,000 voters cast their choice for the seat, according to multiple media sources. Around 84 percent favored Coakley, 15 percent voted for Brown and 1 percent for independent candidate Joe Kennedy – no relation to the late Sen. Kennedy.

At Precinct 3, the Immanuel Lutheran Church on North Pleasant Street, election constable Catherine Butterfield said polls there were busy throughout Tuesday and that student turnout was higher than would be expected for a state senate election.

Butterfield said there was confusion among many students on which precinct they were registered to vote in and if they were registered to vote in Amherst at all.

Though he won, Brown's supporters were not easy to find at polls around Amherst, which has historically voted favorably for Democrats. Only one of nearly two dozen voters interviewed yesterday said they had voted for him.

Nineteen-year-old Rachel Foley, a freshman nursing major, voted for Brown because she wanted, "to see more of a balance," by having a Republican win in the heavily Democratic Massachusetts, and because she "didn't like Coakley's negative ads."

Nearly every voter questioned at the Bang's Community Center polling location yesterday evening said they were especially motivated to vote because of how close the race had become in the final weeks of campaigning and due to the potential impact the winner could have on major national issues such as healthcare.

"[Healthcare] doesn't affect me personally all that much, but I just feel like something has to be done," said Gabriel Gent, a 20-year-old junior and psychology major, who said he voted for Coakley.

Lieselle Trinidad, a graduate student studying mechanical engineering, and Megan Howe, who is working towards a second bachelor's degree in nursing, both 31, said they voted for Coakely because of her pro-healthcare reform and pro-women's rights stance.

"I was at home, about to eat dinner, and I thought 'there's only one hour left to vote, but, OK, I have to do this.'

Collegian Staff writer Matthew M. Robare contributed to this report.
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One Response to "Scott Brown elected Mass. senator"

Ed says:
January 21, 2010 at 11:44 am
Back in the days before the mASSgop and the MACR destroyed the UMass Republican Club, there would have been 20-50 people with Brown signs all over everywhere and there wouldn't have been any problem finding Brown supporters.

Scott Brown won IN SPITE OF the mASSgop and Jennifer Nasser, pushed out of the Governor's race, he took the one that no one wanted and won it…

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POLL OF THE WEEK

Which DC reigns supreme?

Franklin (70%, 31 Votes)

Berkshire (30%, 13 Votes)

Total Voters: **44**

Polls Archive

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