

Political preview 2010 BY ROBERT DAVID SULLIVAN

THE SURPRISE ELECTION of Republican Scott Brown as US Senator in January was only the beginning of what promises to be a tumultuous year of politics in Massachusetts. We've put together some stats on some of the major factors in statewide politics in the past and future.

PARTY DOWN

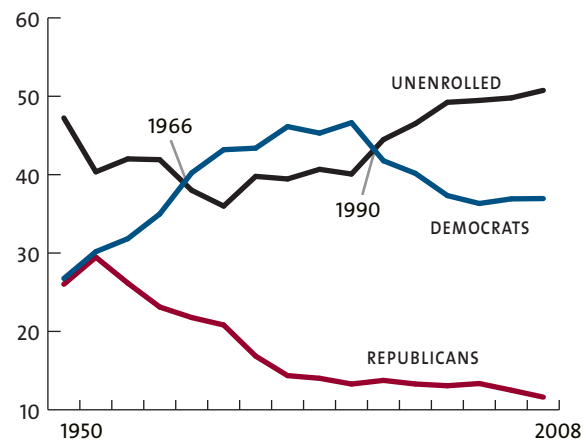
Democrats have outnumbered Republicans in Massachusetts for more than 60 years. But as the graph at right shows, there has been considerable fluctuation in party strength over that time, and the “unenrolled” (the Bay State’s term for independents) are now on the upswing.

Allegiance to the Democrats was still fairly weak at the end of World War II, but the party began to sprint ahead of the GOP in the 1960s, after the election of John F. Kennedy as president. (The party has held both houses of the Legislature since 1958.) The Democrats hit a peak of 47 percent of the electorate in 1986, the year that Gov. Michael Dukakis was elected to a third term and began a presidential campaign based on the “Massachusetts Miracle.” Four years later, after Dukakis lost the White House and the state’s economy suffered a major breakdown, the Republicans won the governorship and unenrolled voters became the largest bloc in the state. In 2008, there was a surge in voter registration, fueled in part by interest in the fight for the presidential nomination between Democrats Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, but that was also the year that the unenrolled became an absolute majority in Massachusetts.

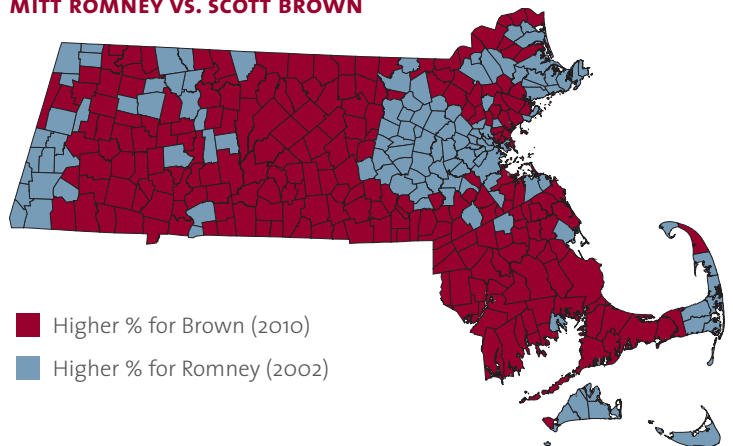
What of the GOP? It was just shy of 30 percent of the electorate during the Eisenhower administration and has been losing ground ever since, bottoming out at 12 percent in 2008. But Brown’s election this winter suggests that an overwhelming majority of independents are willing to vote Republican.

As the map at right shows, Brown did better than the previous Republican to win a statewide race in Massachusetts—Gov. Mitt Romney in 2002—in most of the state, especially in Plymouth and Worcester counties. What’s unclear is whether this was a surge for Republicanism or merely a backlash of independents against the ruling Democratic Party. If it’s the former, it’s good news for probable

PARTY REGISTRATION



MITT ROMNEY VS. SCOTT BROWN



Republican gubernatorial nominee Charlie Baker. If the latter, Democrat-turned-independent Tim Cahill may be the principal opposition to Democratic Gov. Deval Patrick this fall.

Sources: Massachusetts Secretary of State’s Office; Massachusetts Office of Campaign and Political Finance; National Institute on Money in State Politics.

Total spent by all gubernatorial campaigns in 2006:

\$42.3 million

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

When candidates get generous with themselves, they can dwarf the campaign spending by political parties and “special interests.” This happened in 2006, when four of the top 10 contributors to Bay State campaigns in 2006 were people giving to themselves. None of them—gubernatorial candidates Chris Gabrieli, Kerry Healey, and Christy Mihos and lieutenant governor hopeful Deborah Goldberg—were successful. As the chart at right shows, self-contributions were by far the biggest source of campaign cash that year. (Food and liquor interests contributed heavily for and against a referendum to allow more supermarkets to sell alcohol.)

The governor’s race was ultimately won by Patrick, who put a relatively paltry \$181,000—4 percent of the total money he raised—into his own campaign, compared with Healey personally kicking in \$10.3 million, equal to 74 percent of the total money she raised.

Patrick was easily outspent by Healey (\$13.2 million to \$8.9 million) over the course of the year. But he had a big advantage in individual contributions, raising \$7.6 million from 381,157 individuals, while Healey reaped \$3.6 million from 162,222 people. As the chart below shows, Patrick also had an edge in luck raising money in the traditional liberal bastions of Boston, Cambridge, Newton, and Brookline. (Healey’s hefty take from Beverly is almost entirely from her self-contribution.)

TOP CONTRIBUTIONS BY “INDUSTRY” TO ALL BAY STATE CAMPAIGNS IN 2006

CONTRIBUTOR	TOTAL AMOUNT
CANDIDATE SELF-FINANCE	\$28,772,411
FOOD PROCESSING AND SALES	\$7,855,471
PARTY COMMITTEES	\$6,690,204
BEER, WINE, AND LIQUOR	\$5,664,210
LAWYERS AND LOBBYISTS	\$5,656,857
PUBLIC SECTOR UNIONS	\$2,754,657
REAL ESTATE	\$1,492,795
GENERAL TRADE UNIONS	\$1,187,879
SECURITIES AND INVESTMENT	\$1,165,879
HEALTH PROFESSIONALS	\$1,148,536

TOP CITIES AND TOWNS FOR 2006 GUBERNATORIAL CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS

PATRICK (D)	TOTAL AMOUNT	HEALEY (R)	TOTAL AMOUNT
BOSTON, MA	\$3,685,160	BEVERLY, MA	\$10,396,564
CAMBRIDGE, MA	\$478,256	BOSTON, MA	\$1,624,695
MILTON, MA	\$394,909	WELLESLEY, MA	\$64,120
NEWTON, MA	\$375,747	NEWTON, MA	\$59,042
BROOKLINE, MA	\$277,861	MILTON, MA	\$53,150
WELLESLEY, MA	\$166,423	WESTON, MA	\$50,276
LEXINGTON, MA	\$164,423	ANDOVER, MA	\$49,283
NEW YORK, NY	\$132,091	NEEDHAM, MA	\$42,190
WASHINGTON, DC	\$129,903	BROOKLINE, MA	\$40,235
ARLINGTON, MA	\$119,856	HINGHAM, MA	\$39,365

“Public discussion is a political duty; this should be a fundamental principle of American government” –JUSTICE LOUIS BRANDEIS

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