

Washington Post-Kaiser-Harvard Massachusetts special election poll

The Washington Post
The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation
Harvard School of Public Health
Massachusetts special election poll

This Washington Post-Kaiser-Harvard poll was conducted by conventional and cellular telephone Jan. 20-21, 2010, among a random sample of 880 voters in the Massachusetts special election on Jan. 19; also interviewed were 242 Massachusetts adults who did not participate in the election. The margin of sampling error for the sample of voters is plus or minus four percentage points. It is plus or minus eight points among non-voters. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by SSRS of Media, Pa.

*= less than 0.5 percent

- 1a. Do you think things in this country today are generally going in the right direction or are seriously off on the wrong track?

Total Voters¹	Brown Voters¹	Coakley Voters¹	Non- voters¹	
31	15	49	38	Right direction
63	81	44	55	Wrong track
5	3	7	6	Don't know
1	*	1	*	Refused

1. Are you registered to vote at your present address, or not?

Total Voters	Brown Voters	Coakley Voters	Non- voters	
100	100	100	43	Yes
-	-	-	57	No
-	-	-	-	Don't know
-	-	-	-	Refused

2. Did you happen to vote in Tuesday's special election for U.S. senate, or not?

Based on total who are registered to vote

Total Voters	Brown Voters	Coakley Voters	Non- voters	
100	100	100	-	Yes, voted
-	-	-	100	No, did not vote
-	-	-	-	Don't know
-	-	-	-	Refused
(n=880)	(n=484)	(n=387)	(n=130)	

¹ Throughout this document, "Voters" is defined as those who say they voted in the special election on January 19, 2010, and who answer the question about which candidate they voted for; "Brown Voters" is defined as those who say they voted for Scott Brown; "Coakley Voters" is defined as those who say they voted for Martha Coakley; "Non-voters" is defined as those who say they are not registered to vote or say they did not vote in the special election.

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1/2. Combo Table based on Total

Total Voters	Brown Voters	Coakley Voters	Non-Voters	
100	100	100	43	Registered voter
100	100	100	-	Voted Tuesday
-	-	-	43	Did not vote Tuesday
-	-	-	57	Not registered
-	-	-	-	Don't know
-	-	-	-	Refused

3. Did you vote for (Martha Coakley, the Democrat), or (Scott Brown, the Republican)?

Based on total registered voters who voted on Tuesday (N=880)

Total Voters	Brown Voters	Coakley Voters	
47	-	100	Martha Coakley, the Democrat
52	100	-	Scott Brown, the Republican
1	-	-	Joe Kennedy, the independent (vol.)
-	-	-	Don't know
-	-	-	Refused
(n=880)	(n=484)	(n=387)	

1/2/3. Combo Table based on Total

Total Voters	Brown Voters	Coakley Voters	Non-voters	
100	100	100	43	Registered voter
100	100	100	-	Voted Tuesday
47	-	100	-	Voted for Martha Coakley
52	100	-	-	Voted for Scott Brown
1	-	-	-	Voted for Joe Kennedy
-	-	-	43	Did not vote Tuesday
-	-	-	57	Not registered
-	-	-	-	Don't know
-	-	-	-	Refused

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4. In deciding your vote for the special election, how much of a factor was (INSERT ITEM) – was it extremely important, very important, not so important, or less important than that?

Question asked of voters only

	Extremely important	Very important	Not so important	Less important than that	Not important at all (vol.)	Don't know	Refused
a. Health care reform efforts in Washington							
Total Voters	56	33	8	1	*	1	-
Brown Voters	62	31	5	1	*	1	-
Coakley Voters	50	36	11	2	*	1	-
b. The economy and jobs							
Total Voters	44	44	9	2	1	*	*
Brown Voters	49	42	7	1	1	-	-
Coakley Voters	38	46	10	4	1	*	*
c. Taxes							
Total Voters	28	39	25	7	1	*	*
Brown Voters	40	41	17	2	-	*	-
Coakley Voters	14	37	33	13	2	*	*
d. The candidates' leadership and personal qualities							
Total Voters	32	47	15	5	1	*	-
Brown Voters	39	49	8	3	1	*	-
Coakley Voters	24	45	23	6	1	*	-
e. The federal budget deficit							
Total Voters	34	36	23	5	1	1	*
Brown Voters	48	36	12	2	-	1	*
Coakley Voters	19	36	34	8	2	1	-
f. Local and Massachusetts state issues							
Total Voters	26	46	19	7	1	*	*
Brown Voters	27	47	17	6	1	1	*
Coakley Voters	24	45	22	9	1	*	*
g. The Obama administration's policies on terrorism suspects							
Total Voters	29	33	23	9	2	3	*
Brown Voters	37	35	19	5	1	2	*
Coakley Voters	21	31	29	14	2	3	-
h. The government's handling of banks and financial institutions							
Total Voters	29	41	21	7	1	1	*
Brown Voters	31	40	22	5	*	2	*
Coakley Voters	26	42	20	10	1	*	*
i. The way Washington is working							
Total Voters	39	42	12	5	1	1	*
Brown Voters	54	36	7	2	-	1	*
Coakley Voters	23	49	17	8	1	2	*

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Summary table – Percentage saying each is “extremely important”

Total Voters	Brown Voters	Coakley Voters	
56	62	50	Health care reform efforts in Washington
44	49	38	The economy and jobs
39	54	23	The way Washington is working
34	48	19	The federal budget deficit
32	39	24	The candidates’ leadership and personal qualities
29	37	21	The Obama administration’s policies on terrorism suspects
29	31	26	The government’s handling of banks and financial institutions
28	40	14	Taxes
26	27	24	Local and Massachusetts state issues

5. You said (ITEMS) were extremely important factors, which would you say was the single most important factor in your vote?

Question asked of voters who said more than one factor was extremely important only; table includes those who said only one or no factor was extremely important

Total Voters	Brown Voters	Coakley Voters	
34	36	32	Health care reform efforts in Washington
18	17	19	The economy and jobs
9	14	3	The way Washington is working
6	6	5	The Obama administration’s policies on terrorism suspects
6	6	4	The candidates’ leadership and personal qualities
3	4	3	The federal budget deficit
3	1	5	Local and Massachusetts state issues
3	1	5	The government’s handling of banks and financial institutions
2	3	*	Taxes
*	*	-	None of these/something else
16	9	22	None was extremely important
*	1	*	Don’t know
*	1	*	Refused

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6. You mentioned that health care reform in Washington was one factor impacting your vote. Can you tell me more specifically what you mean by that?
(VERBATIM RESPONSE RECORDED. MULTIPLE RESPONSES ACCEPTED.)

Based on total voters who said health care reform efforts in Washington was an "extremely" or "very" important factor in their vote; Results add to more than 100 percent because more than one answer was accepted.

	Total Voters 19	Brown Voters 30	Coakley Voters 6
Political Process			
Don't like the way it is being handled; politics; dealmaking; closed doors; lack of transparency	7	13	1
Too complicated; people don't understand plan; need to better inform public	4	7	1
Not what the people want, "pushing down our throats", "ramming through"	4	7	0
Partisanship; lack of cooperation	4	4	4
Moving too fast; not fully thought out	3	5	1
Lobbyists/Insurance/drug companies/corporations have too much power/influence	1	1	0
Moving too slow	0	0	0
General support for reform or current bill	18	9	28
General support for health reform; need to fix current system	12	8	17
Support current bill; want bill to pass; want candidate to vote for bill	5	1	10
Need to pass something now, even if it's not perfect	1	0	1
Coverage and access	17	4	32
Universal coverage; everyone should have health care; health care is a right	10	2	21
Need more/better coverage for uninsured	4	0	8
Need improved access to care	2	2	2
People need help	1	0	1
Health care for the poor	0	0	0
General opposition to reform or current bill	15	22	5
Opposition to current bill; do not want bill to pass; want candidate to vote against bill	5	8	2
Current bill is wrong approach, needs more work (general)	5	8	2
Current bill is too large; overreaching; want something smaller	1	2	0
Concern that plan will make coverage, access, quality worse	1	2	0
Opposition to individual mandate; people should not be required to have insurance	1	1	1
Plan will do more harm than good, hurt people	1	1	0
Disapprove; don't like what's going on (general)	1	1	0
Opposition to universal health care	0	1	0
Country doesn't need reform	0	0	0
Current bill is too liberal	0	0	0
Impact on self/specific groups	10	13	6
Concerns about impact on seniors/Medicare	5	5	5
Concerns about personal impact/impact on family	3	4	2
Satisfied with status quo; like the health care I have now; don't want things to change	2	4	0
Concern for "little guy," common people	1	1	0
Impact on small business	0	0	0
Cost of health care	8	4	13
Cost/affordability of health care/insurance for individuals	8	4	12
Total cost of health care in country	0	0	1
Cost of health care (general)	0	1	0

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6. You mentioned that health care reform in Washington was one factor impacting your vote. Can you tell me more specifically what you mean by that?
(VERBATIM RESPONSE RECORDED. MULTIPLE RESPONSES ACCEPTED.)

CONTINUED

Cost of reform/taxes/government spending	8	14	1
Concerns about cost of reform/cost of current bill	5	8	1
Concerns about tax increases	3	5	0
Concerns about federal deficit/debt	1	1	0
Concerns about government spending	0	1	0
Government involvement	8	12	1
Concerns about government involvement in health care	5	8	1
Mentions of socialism/socialized medicine	2	3	0
Don't want government telling me what to do	1	2	0
Support for Obama/Democrats	6	1	13
Support for Obama's agenda/Obama's health care plan	4	0	9
Support for Democrats/Democratic plan	1	1	2
Want to keep Democratic super-majority in Senate	1	0	2
Mentions of specific provisions	4	4	3
Concerns about abortion	2	3	2
Support for public option	1	0	2
Support for tort/malpractice reform	0	1	0
Opposition to public option	0	1	0
Concerns about giving coverage to wrong people	3	5	1
Concern about illegal immigrants; coverage for non-citizens	2	3	0
Don't want to pay for other people	1	1	0
Working people shouldn't have to pay for those who are not working	1	1	0
Giving coverage to people who don't deserve it; people abusing the system	0	0	0
Opposition to Obama/Democrats	3	6	0
Opposition to Obama's agenda/Obama's health care plan	3	5	1
Want to break Democratic super-majority in Senate	0	1	0
Opposition to Democrats/Democratic plan (general)	0	0	0
Insurance company mentions	2	0	4
Insurance reforms; coverage for pre-existing conditions	1	0	3
Insurance companies have too much control over health care	1	0	1
Not good for Mass/should be state by state	2	3	1
Not good for Massachusetts; already have plan here	2	3	0
Reform should be handled by states	1	1	0
Economy/jobs	1	1	1
Economy/jobs mentions	1	0	1
Government should focus on jobs/economy/other problems before health care	1	1	0
Other states should have what Massachusetts has	1	0	3
Other	10	5	16
Other	3	3	4
Agreement/disagreement with one candidate's position/views on health care (general)	3	1	6
Kennedy legacy	1	0	3
Choice of providers, choice of health care	1	1	0
Passage of current bill (general)	1	0	1
Support for single payer	1	0	1
Candidate's position on current bill (general)	0	0	0
No answer	3	3	3
	(n=789)	(n=447)	(n=338)

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7. Was your Senate vote more for Brown or more against Coakley?

Based on total who voted for Scott Brown (N=484)

**Brown
voters**

70 More for Brown
25 More against Coakley
3 Don't know
1 Refused

8. Was your Senate vote more for Coakley or more against Brown?

Based on total who voted for Martha Coakley (N=387)

**Coakley
Voters**

57 More for Coakley
40 More against Brown
4 Don't know
***** Refused

3/7/8.Combo Table based on Total Voters

Total Voters	Brown Voters	Coakley Voters	
52	100	-	Voted for Scott Brown
37	70	-	Vote was more for Brown
13	25	-	Vote was more against Coakley
2	4	-	DK/Refused
47	-	100	Voted for Martha Coakley
27	-	57	Vote was more for Coakley
19	-	40	Vote was more against Brown
2	-	4	DK/Refused
1	-	-	Voted for Joe Kennedy

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9. Was one reason for your vote for Senator to express (support for) Obama, to express (opposition to) Obama, or was Obama not a factor in your choice?

Question asked of voters only

Total Voters	Brown Voters	Coakley Voters	
28	4	55	Express support for Obama
23	43	*	Express opposition to Obama
48	52	45	Obama was not a factor
*	1	-	Don't know
*	*	-	Refused

- 9a. Was one reason for your vote for Senator to express (support for) the Democratic agenda in Washington, to express (opposition to) this, or was the Democratic agenda not a factor in your choice?

Question asked of voters only

Total Voters	Brown Voters	Coakley Voters	
34	5	67	Express support for the Democratic agenda
35	65	1	Express opposition to this
29	29	29	The Democratic agenda was not a factor
1	*	3	Don't know
-	-	-	Refused

10. How do you personally feel about the Obama administration's policies? Would you say...?

Total Voters	Brown Voters	Coakley Voters	Non- Voters	
52	24	84	54	Enthusiastic/satisfied NET
16	4	30	11	Enthusiastic
36	20	54	43	Satisfied but not enthusiastic
47	75	16	41	Dissatisfied/angry NET
31	45	14	30	Dissatisfied but not angry
16	29	1	11	Angry
*	1	*	5	Don't know
*	*	*	*	Refused

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11. How do you personally feel about the policies offered by the Republicans in Congress?
Would you say...?

Total Voters	Brown Voters	Coakley Voters	Non- Voters	
40	60	17	35	Enthusiastic/satisfied NET
8	12	4	7	Enthusiastic
32	48	14	28	Satisfied but not enthusiastic
58	37	81	56	Dissatisfied/angry NET
35	31	39	41	Dissatisfied but not angry
23	6	43	15	Angry
2	3	1	9	Don't know
1	1	*	*	Refused

12. When senator-elect Brown goes to Washington, do you think he should mainly work (with the Democrats to try to get some Republican ideas into legislation) or should mainly work (to stop the Democratic agenda)?

12a. Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

Total Voters	Brown Voters	Coakley Voters	Non- Voters	
82	75	89	75	Mainly work with the Democrats to try to get some Republican ideas into legislation (NET)
66	60	73	48	Strongly
15	15	15	27	Somewhat
11	19	3	16	Mainly work to stop the Democratic agenda (NET)
2	3	1	5	Somewhat
9	16	2	11	Strongly
6	5	6	6	Don't know
2	1	2	3	Refused

13. Thinking specifically about the changes to the country's health care system proposed by Obama and the Democrats, would you prefer that Brown (work with the Democrats on these changes) or (try to stop these changes from happening)?

13a. Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

Total Voters	Brown Voters	Coakley Voters	Non- Voters	
70	48	94	69	Work with the Democrats on these changes (NET)
61	40	85	52	Strongly
9	8	9	17	Somewhat
28	50	4	26	Try to stop these changes from happening (NET)
3	3	2	5	Somewhat
26	47	2	21	Strongly
2	1	2	4	Don't know
*	1	-	1	Refused

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14. During the campaign did either of the candidates for Senate attack the other unfairly?

Question asked of voters only

Total Voters	Brown Voters	Coakley Voters	
66	84	47	Yes
25	11	40	No
8	4	13	Don't know
*	*	1	Refused

- 14a. Which candidate attacked the other unfairly?

Based on total voters who say either of the candidates for Senate attacked the other unfairly

Total Voters	Brown Voters	Coakley Voters	
69	91	24	Martha Coakley, the Democrat attacked Scott Brown unfairly
8	*	24	Scott Brown, the Republican attacked Martha Coakley unfairly
21	8	46	Both candidates attacked each other unfairly
*	*	1	Neither
2	*	4	Don't know
*	-	1	Refused
(n=577)	(n=399)	(n=172)	

- 14/14a. Combo Table based on Total Voters

Total Voters	Brown Voters	Coakley Voters	
66	84	47	Either of the candidates for Senate attacked the other unfairly
46	77	11	Martha Coakley, the Democrat attacked Scott Brown Unfairly
5	*	11	Scott Brown, the Republican attacked Martha Coakley unfairly
14	7	22	Both candidates attacked each other unfairly
*	*	*	Neither
25	11	40	None of the candidates for Senate attacked the other unfairly
8	4	13	Don't know
*	*	1	Refused

15. Which was more important in your vote for Senate—(your candidate's positions on the issues) or (your candidate's leadership and personal qualities)?

Question asked of voters only

Total Voters	Brown Voters	Coakley Voters	
75	72	78	Your candidate's position on the issues
23	25	20	Your candidate's leadership and personal qualities
2	2	2	Don't know
*	1	-	Refused

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16. Thinking about the outcome of the special election, would you describe yourself as...?
(READ LIST. ENTER ONE ONLY)

Total Voters	Brown Voters	Coakley Voters	Non- Voters	
61	92	26	54	Enthusiastic/satisfied NET
36	66	4	16	Enthusiastic
24	26	22	38	Satisfied but not enthusiastic
39	8	73	41	Dissatisfied/angry NET
25	4	48	32	Dissatisfied but not angry
14	3	25	9	Angry
*	*	1	5	Don't know
*	*	-	1	Refused

On another topic ...

18. Overall, given what you know about them, would you say you support or oppose the proposed changes to the health care system being developed by (Congress) and (the Obama administration)?
(GET ANSWER, THEN ASK: Do you support/oppose the proposed changes strongly or somewhat?)

Total Voters	Brown Voters	Coakley Voters	Non- Voters	
43	13	77	49	Support NET
21	5	39	22	Strongly support
23	9	38	27	Somewhat support
48	80	13	39	Oppose NET
12	14	9	10	Somewhat oppose
36	66	4	29	Strongly oppose
8	6	9	12	Don't know
1	*	1	*	Refused

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19. Do you think (INSERT) would be (better off) or (worse off) if the president and Congress passed health care reform, or don't you think it would make much difference?

	Better off	Worse off	Wouldn't make much difference	Don't know	Refused
a. You and your family					
Total Voters	22	39	36	3	*
Brown Voters	8	65	24	3	1
Coakley Voters	38	9	49	3	-
Non-Voters	33	20	40	7	-
b. The country as a whole					
Total Voters	44	40	12	3	1
Brown Voters	14	72	10	3	1
Coakley Voters	78	4	15	2	*
Non-Voters	47	24	22	7	*
c. Massachusetts					
Total Voters	23	37	37	3	*
Brown Voters	7	64	26	3	*
Coakley Voters	42	7	49	2	-
Non-Voters	35	21	37	7	-

20. How worried are you about the direction of the nation's economy in the next year?
Would you say you are...?

Question asked of voters only

Total Voters	Brown Voters	Coakley Voters	
85	92	78	Worried NET
45	54	34	Very worried
40	38	44	Somewhat worried
15	8	22	Not worried NET
11	5	18	Not too worried
4	4	4	Not worried at all
*	*	*	Don't know
-	-	-	Refused

21. Which comes closer to your view—(government should do more to solve problems) or (government is doing too many things better left to businesses and individuals)?

Total Voters	Brown Voters	Coakley Voters	Non- Voters	
50	26	77	58	Government should do more to solve problems
47	73	19	37	Government is doing too many things better left to businesses and individuals
2	1	4	5	Don't know
*	*	1	1	Refused

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22. On another subject, thinking back to when Ted Kennedy was in office, would you say you approved or disapproved of the way Kennedy handled his job as senator?
(GET ANSWER, THEN ASK: Did you approve/disapprove strongly or somewhat?)

Question asked of voters only

Total Voters	Brown Voters	Coakley Voters	
73	52	97	Approve NET
47	19	78	Strongly approve
26	33	19	Somewhat approve
23	41	3	Disapprove NET
10	17	2	Somewhat disapprove
13	24	1	Strongly disapprove
3	6	1	Don't know
1	1	-	Refused

23. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as president?
(GET ANSWER, THEN ASK: Do you approve/disapprove strongly or somewhat?)

Total Voters	Brown Voters	Coakley Voters	Non- Voters	
61	33	92	69	Approve NET
29	7	55	30	Strongly approve
32	27	37	39	Somewhat approve
37	64	8	26	Disapprove NET
16	24	7	10	Somewhat disapprove
21	39	1	17	Strongly disapprove
1	2	*	5	Don't know
1	1	-	-	Refused

24. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Deval Patrick is handling his job as governor?
(GET ANSWER, THEN ASK: Do you approve/disapprove strongly or somewhat?)

Total Voters	Brown Voters	Coakley Voters	Non- Voters	
36	15	60	45	Approve NET
10	1	21	12	Strongly approve
25	14	39	33	Somewhat approve
60	82	35	40	Disapprove NET
21	24	18	15	Somewhat disapprove
39	59	17	24	Strongly disapprove
4	3	5	15	Don't know
*	*	*	*	Refused

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26. As you may know, Massachusetts has a law that is aimed at assuring that virtually all Massachusetts residents have health insurance. Given what you know about it, in general, do you support or oppose the Massachusetts Universal Health Insurance Law? (GET ANSWER, THEN ASK: Do you support/oppose it strongly or somewhat?)

Total Voters	Brown Voters	Coakley Voters	Non-Voters	
68	51	87	64	Support NET
40	22	60	42	Strongly support
28	28	28	23	Somewhat support
27	44	8	29	Oppose NET
11	16	5	12	Somewhat oppose
16	28	3	17	Strongly oppose
5	5	4	6	Don't know
*	*	*	1	Refused

27. Did you happen to vote in the last presidential election, when Barack Obama ran against John McCain, or did you skip that one?

Total Voters	Brown Voters	Coakley Voters	Non-Voters	
97	97	96	43	Did vote
3	3	4	56	Did not vote
-	-	-	1	Don't know
-	-	-	-	Refused

28. Which candidate did you vote for?

Based on total who voted in the last presidential election

Total Voters	Brown Voters	Coakley Voters	Non-Voters	
60	29	96	70	Barack Obama
37	68	2	19	John McCain
2	3	1	2	Someone else
*	*	*	1	Don't know
*	1	*	7	Refused
(n=854)	(n=468)	(n=377)	(n=135)	

- 27/28. Combo Table based on Total

Total Voters	Brown Voters	Coakley Voters	Non-Voters	
97	97	96	43	Did vote in the last presidential election
58	28	92	30	Voted for Barack Obama
35	66	2	8	Voted for John McCain
2	2	1	1	Voted for someone else
3	3	4	56	Did not vote in the last presidential election
-	-	-	1	Don't know
-	-	-	-	Refused