Suffolk University/Boston Herald Poll

February 4, 2014
Charlie Baker: 'The Only Poll That Really Matters Is Election Day'

By WILL ROSELIEF AND BOSTON PUBLIC RADIO STAFF

Massachusetts gubernatorial hopeful Charlie Baker stopped by Studio Three for Boston Public Radio’s second round of interviews with the candidates. Baker talked to Jim Braude and Margery Eagan about a new Suffolk University and Boston Herald poll showing him trailing Democratic candidate Martha Coakley; problems at the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families; gun control; and the appropriate use of the federal death penalty in cases like the trial of Dzhokhar Tsarnaev.

A new poll has you down by 13 points to Mass. Attorney General Martha Coakley. What do you make of that?

As I’ve said many times and will continue to say, the only poll that really matters is Election Day. And I learned that the hard way in 2010.

I’m really happy with the response we’re getting from voters out there, doesn’t matter what their stripe is. People are really interested in having somebody with real-world private sector as well as public-sector experience on Beacon Hill. People want somebody who knows something about healthcare and can deal with the mess that’s been created by the Health Connector and federal healthcare reform here in Massachusetts. People want somebody who can be a check on the legislature, and I think I check all those boxes.

Do you know independent candidate Jeff McCormick? Do his deep pockets make you nervous?

I’m running for governor. I plan to continue to run for governor, and I’m going to make my case to the voters on what I believe we can do to increase jobs and improve our economy, and as I’ve talked to you before, close the achievement gap in schools, make higher ed less expensive, and create great communities. My view on this is very simple. I’m going to communicate and talk to people about my message, collect data and information from them as I wander around the state, and have a chance to engage with voters. I think, come election day, we’ll do just fine.

Seventy percent of Massachusetts voters thinks there’s a system-wide failure at the Department of Children and Families. You had a lot of experience in Gov. Bill Weld’s administration supervising the Department of Social Services. How would you fix DCF?

There are six key elements to measuring how the department is doing in taking care of
Everybody thinks about this agency as sort of a big blob. The way to really go at this is to say, What's going on in region one, What's going on in region two, and then finding the places where you have problems, which would come up if you actually did some of this work and made some of this information available, and then go after it. Because, I do believe that we do have a systemic problem here.

The second thing I'd say — and we issued a statement on this this morning — the state, the Governor, the Attorney General should stop fighting the suit which clearly raised a whole series of significant problems, systemic, at the department last year, and start engaging in settlement discussions.

It's a federal lawsuit brought by a children's rights group.

They basically laid out a case and used a whole bunch of sad and troubling and disturbing cases to make the point that Massachusetts was failing kids, and Massachusetts chose to fight them. They moved the case from one court to another, went shopping for a judge, did all this stuff, and ended up getting a dismissal of the case. Although, if you read the opinion, basically what the judge says is, these cases are horrible, they just don't rise to some sort of judicially outrageous level. (...) My view on this is really simple. When it comes to dealing with kids under the state's care and custody, the goal here should be to stop fighting this stuff and start fixing this. I think we're heading in the wrong direction on this.

One of the things the judge said was that DCF has been chronically underfunded for decades. What do you think about that?

My central argument on this is, maybe some of it's about money, but some of it's also about management and structure and focus and discipline, and all those other good things that generate really great casework. I go back to my original point here, which is, the way to go at this is region by region. This notion that the performance and operation in every region in every agency in state government is the same? Basically that's impossible, first of all, and secondly, that's not the way you should manage this. (...) Use some of the standard measures for figuring this stuff out that people already know about. Like, when was the last time a kid was seen, in every single region? What is the relationship between the police departments and the school departments in each region? Because, the schools and the cops as we know, are often the eyes and the ears of the departments. I mean, this is basic, 101 casework stuff, and it hasn’t been part of the conversation at all.

When DCF Commissioner Olga Roche testified on Beacon Hill, Rep. Linsky asked Roche if there were more cases like Jeremiah Oliver's out there. She said, absolutely not. Do you buy it?

I think that's setting the bar unbelievably low. (...) We should do better than that. My view on this is, until the department comes out with something that specifically lays out where we are, region by region, I don't think anybody knows the answer to this question. And that's what's so terrifying and frustrating and worrisome to me.

That Fitchburg story? People have talked about the fact that the Fitchburg office had issues for a while. Tons of grievances, all kinds of issues, it was an alarm bell going on there in that region for a while, and yet it took a horrible tragedy to actually raise this to the level where people actually did something about it.

Social workers aren't making a ton of money right now, many in mid-$30,000s for salary. Would they make more money under a Baker administration?

I would certainly take that into consideration. I think it's important. I also think another
thing we should be doing is creating master classes among social workers within state
government. Some of these people are superstars, and we should be figuring out ways to
leverage all they know and what they bring to the table, and making them a bigger part of
how we think about managing the department.

There certainly issues in the way the department is funded. The thing I would hate to
jump on right now is [that] that is the only issue they face. One of the things I learned
when I worked at Health and Human Services — admittedly, a very long time ago — was
that one of the biggest problems they had was getting support from lawyers for a lot of the
work they needed to do to simply process cases in court. (...) You just have to be strategic
about where you make investments.

The Herald ran a story Tuesday
(http://bostonherald.com/news_opinion/local_coverage/2014/02/dcf_handbook_shocker_criminal_past_doesnt_disqualify_foster)

about foster parents. Apparently, if you’ve previously committed certain
criimes, you’re still eligible to be a foster parent. Should this be changed?

I was [stunned], and I say that as somebody who knows a lot of people who are foster
parents, who are wonderful, wonderful people. I always worry in these conversations that
we’re going to overplay what’s going on here.

I’m speechless by what showed up in that [Boston Herald] story today. Obviously, I’d
hope that today that policy would change, because that’s ridiculous on every level.

What will you do as governor to make college more affordable in
Massachusetts?

One of the things we need to do is figure out how to create a three-year type degree
program. (...) I think we need to leverage the online stuff, and make it possible for kids to
engage in an online and classroom-based experience as they work their way through. And
I think the state should lead the charge on that.

We should figure out a way to leverage the work that Northeastern has done over the
years with that co-op program. Kids get jobs, they get paid while they’re going to school,
and by the way, they are the standalone player in that space in Massachusetts. How can it
be that we haven’t figured out how to make that kind of a model something that we bake
into what we do in the state system as well?

I’ve now been to a bunch of vocational-technical schools. Today’s voc-tech school is
nothing like the (...) system I knew as a kid. These places have really moved big-time into
the 21st Century, and provide a very effective education that is built and based around
some opportunity associated with work. (...) We should be figuring out ways to connect
those kinds of schools more closely to both community college, associate degree programs,
and public as well as private higher-ed. (...) I’ve talked to a bunch of manufacturers who’ve said to me they have literally thousands of
jobs open right now in Massachusetts. (...) The big missing link in this is something that
gets a voc-tech kid a two-year, one-year associates degree so they can get the training they
need to get those jobs.

Gov. Patrick proposed free community college early in his first term. Would
you do that?

This is less an issue about free community college, and more about whether the college or
the program is actually preparing the kid for the jobs that are available. (...) How many
years have we been talking about this, and these jobs are still sitting out there, open and
available!

If we can connect the job piece and education piece together, either by getting a kid from a
voc-tech program into a junior college or a community college that makes this work, I’m
all for figuring out how to help the kid pay for it. But we’ve got to fix the curriculum piece
first, and make it relate more to what the employer community is looking for.
You were a Big Brother when you were in college. How did you get involved with that organization?

I heard an ad on the radio, and I wrote the phone number down on my desk calendar at school, back when we all had desk calendars, when I was a freshman. I stared at it for a while. (...) I finally got around to calling it, and I interviewed and went through the process, and they matched me with an 11-year-old kid who had a lot of issues and a lot of problems. (...) They matter. They move kids. The biggest thing they do is they give kids (...) a “fan” — somebody who will applaud and stand on the sidelines, help that kid, hell or high water, whatever it is, and help them through their problems and their issues. Many of these kids just don’t have that. (...) A lot of those kids really need someone to sort of be there for them.

What did your Little Brother write to you?

When he graduated from high school — and his trip through high school was really something, it was like an Indiana Jones movie — he wrote, "Thanks Chaz, couldn't have done it without you."

After we'd been hanging out for a few years, he said to me one time that I was the only person who spent time with him that didn't get paid to spend time with him.

Are you conscious this time around about couching your criticism about the Patrick administration, or whoever the Democratic nominee is?

I grew up listening to my Mom, who was a Democrat, and my Dad who was a Republican, debate politics across the kitchen table all the time. It was a very civil, informative, respectful dialogue. As a guy who spent his whole career in healthcare and government as a Republican in Massachusetts, I always managed to get stuff done and get along with people. And I think, part of getting along with people is acknowledging that most of the time we're all trying to achieve the same ends. What we're really going to end up arguing about is means.

US Attorney General Holder announced he'd seek the death penalty against Dzhokhar Tsarnaev. Why isn't a life sentence a harsher punishment, and how would you craft a death penalty law here in the Bay State?

I think we're talking here about an act of terrorism, a heinous, horrible, cowardly act that not only maimed scores of people, but also killed many people, including children. It was planned and perpetrated, and there's no doubt about who did it, or why he did it. It's got all the elements of something that deserves the ultimate punishment.

My big concern about life without parole is (...), maybe it is or maybe it isn't. That's always a question and an issue in the back of people's minds. Let's put it this way, I didn't have any trouble when they put [convicted bomber] Timothy McVeigh to death. That didn't bother me at all.

But if you believed that life without parole really meant a life sentence without parole, would you still support that, instead of the death penalty?

I have no problem with having a system in which the prosecution can seek it if it believes that is the appropriate punishment for the crime.

Should Massachusetts have a death penalty?

I support it. (...) If you were to say to me, what are the five things I want to do to create safer communities, maybe even the ten things, this isn't one of them.

Would one of those things be tougher gun laws, which looks to be something Speaker DeLeo is proposing immediately?

I give the Speaker enormous credit for not knee-jerking this issue and actually putting
together a group to take a good, hard look at this, and coming up with a pretty comprehensive set of recommendations. Having looked through it, there’s a bunch of things in it I can support. (...) We already have pretty significant laws on the books, and I’d like to look at what we already in the context of what’s being proposed.

I tell you one thing that would make a big difference in a lot of these places, we should stop cutting local aid. (...) You go to Brockton or Fall River or a lot of these mid-size cities in Massachusetts that have big-time issues in a bunch of their neighborhoods? One of their biggest problems is their police forces are down significantly from where they were in 2007.

Did you see the Mitt Romney documentary, "Mitt," on Netflix?

I have not.

If there was a movie called "Charlie," what would we learn about you that people don’t know?

If I don’t have to put on real clothes, I don’t. I’m perfectly capable of wandering around all day long in pajamas and a sweatshirt, or a sweatshirt and sweatpants. I’m not one of those people who thinks I have to get dressed when I get up.

You said if the SJC says the repeal of the casino law can go to the ballot, I believe you said you’d support it. Is that still the case?

I see no reason why it shouldn’t be on the ballot. I think the arguments that are being made about why it’s not ballot-worthy don’t make sense to me.

Do you support marijuana legalization being on the ballot, and would you vote for it?

I always support putting stuff on the ballot. I’m a big direct-democracy guy. I will probably vote against it.

>> Listen to the entire interview with Charlie Baker.
Suffolk University poll: Republican Charlie Baker leads over all Democratic gubernatorial candidates except Martha Coakley

Charlie Baker & Martha Coakley

In this composite of Associated Press file photos, Republican Charlie Bakers is shown alongside Massachusetts Attorney General Martha Coakley. A Suffolk University/Boston Herald poll released on Feb. 4, 2014 concluded that while Baker leads over four Democrats in the gubernatorial race, Coakley is the sole Democrat polling higher than Baker in a hypothetical match-up.

Robert Rizzuto, The Republican

By Robert Rizzuto, The Republican

Email the author | Follow on Twitter

on February 04, 2014 at 3:40 PM, updated February 07, 2014 at 5:14 PM

Republican gubernatorial candidate Charlie Baker's chances in the 2014 Massachusetts race are looking good, according to a new Suffolk University/Boston Herald poll, which concluded he is leading all the Democrats in the crowded race with the exception of one.

Attorney General Martha Coakley is the sole Democrat ranking higher than Baker, according to the new poll, which measured the standing of some of the race's many candidates nine months ahead of election day.

In a hypothetical match up, the attorney general led 44 percent to 31 percent over Baker, who lost a 2010 bid to Gov. Deval Patrick by just six points.

"The survey shows that Martha Coakley is the frontrunner in the Democratic pack, and she leads Charlie Baker by double-digits," said David Paleologos, director of the Suffolk University Political Research Center in Boston in a press release. "However, Baker shows considerable strength when matched up against the other potential Democratic nominees."

A poll of 652 registered Massachusetts voters conducted by New England College in Henniker, N.H. also concluded that Coakley is the only Democrat pulling a higher number than Baker. That poll placed Coakley with support from 40 percent of respondents in the hypothetical match-up, compared to Baker’s 30 percent.

Baker, the former CEO of Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, led over Treasurer Steve Grossman, 33-28 percent; former national security advisor Juliette Kayyem, 37-19 percent; former Medicare administrator Don Berwick, 38-19 percent; and former Wellesley town selectman Joe Avellone III, 38-19 percent.

In a hypothetical five-way Democratic primary presented to registered Democrats and independents who said they would choose a Democratic ballot in the primary, Coakley led with support from 56 percent of respondents, while Grossman had 11 percent, Kayyem had four percent, and Avellone and Berwick each had 1 percent each, although the 27 percent of voters still undecided could sway the race in anyone's favor.

The poll also concluded that Coakley's campaign is strong among key demographic groups.
The poll concluded that Coakley is the choice of 73 percent of Democrats, 53 percent of women voters and minority voters, 73 percent of MSNBC viewers, 63 percent of NBC viewers, 57 percent of CNN viewers, and 55 percent of CBS and Comedy Central viewers.

Baker was favored by 73 percent of registered Republicans in the state and 58 percent of Fox News viewers.

The poll also concluded that while an active anti-casino movement is hoping to place a question on the ballot to repeal the state law legalizing casinos, the majority of voters still approve of casino gaming. Fifty-one percent of likely voters approve of casinos in Massachusetts, while 37 percent disapprove, and 12 percent were undecided.

Among those who disapproved, 52 percent said that they were opposed to casino gaming in general, while 39 percent indicated that their opposition was not to gambling in general, but they preferred not to have a casino in Massachusetts.

"With ballot question opponents mobilizing, the 51 percent casino approval is fragile," said Paleologos. "Most statewide referenda must survive growth in the 'no' side--from voters who flat-out disapprove along with those who are on the fence but decide that they want things to remain as they are. That 51 percent is not a solid number if ballot history is any judge."

But despite collecting enough signatures to qualify the question, anti-casino activists may need to win a lawsuit at the state Supreme Judicial Court to proceed because Coakley, in her role as attorney general, ruled that its passage would amount to an uncompensated taking of private property from casino companies and their partners.

The poll also concluded that voters feel the failures of the state's Department of Children and Families to keep track of Jeremiah Oliver are systematic rather than isolated, as DCF has argued. Oliver is a missing Fitchburg boy who is presumed dead as his disappearance was reported months after it reportedly happened, despite being on the radar of the state department tasked with ensuring his safety.

Support for efforts in Massachusetts to raise the minimum wage to $10 an hour also remain strong, according to the poll, as nearly 77 percent of those surveyed said they support such a move.

The poll, which used live telephone interviews, included a field of 600 likely voters and was conducted between Jan. 29-Feb. 3. It has a 4 percent margin of error.
Baker, Coakley strong in poll

By ROBERT RIZZUTO
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Governor’s race. Coakley has strong showing in new Suffolk/Herald poll

A poll released on Tuesday puts Attorney General Martha Coakley ahead of her fellow democrats contending for governor.

The Suffolk University/Boston Herald poll recently surveyed 600 voters. In a hypothetical five-way Democratic primary, Coakley led the field with 56 percent. Second place went to state Treasurer Steve Grossman who earned 11 percent. METRO
New Suffolk University poll shows a casino ballot question could be a close vote

Jon Chesto
Managing Editor, Print- Boston Business Journal
Email | Twitter | Google+

Here’s how the gambling industry has generally viewed its popularity in Massachusetts: Voters don’t mind casinos in the Bay State, as long as you don’t build one near their home.

But a new poll out this week should serve as a wakeup call to executives at operators such as MGM and Mohegan Sun who are working to get a casino built here. This poll’s bad news for them: A majority of voters could end up being against a casino anywhere in the state.

Only 51 percent of 600 likely voters who responded to a Suffolk University survey say they approve of plans to open casinos in Massachusetts, while 37 disapprove and 12 percent were undecided. Among those who disapproved of casinos, 52 percent were opposed to casino gambling in general, while 39 percent indicated that casinos are OK elsewhere but not in Massachusetts.

In general, it didn’t matter which part of the state the respondents hailed from: Forty-five percent of the respondents in Northeastern Massachusetts approved of casinos, while the approval ratings in other parts of the state were in the 50s. The most statistically significant split was based on gender: Fifty-six percent of men approved of casinos, compared with 45 percent of women.

These poll results matter because of the potential for a ballot question in November. This ballot question could undo the state’s 2011 law that allows up to three casinos and one slot machine parlor here, not to mention all the time and the millions of dollars that the industry has subsequently poured into the state.

The casino companies are hanging their hopes right now on Attorney General Martha Coakley’s defense of the 2011 law, and her staff’s argument that a ballot question can’t be used to interfere with an implied contract, and thus constitute taking of property. (In this case, the implied contract is between state officials and the casino operators that have invested in the application process.)

But the anti-casino brigade, which is being helped by former attorney general Scott Harshbarger, will be quick to point out that it was a ballot question that successfully ended greyhound racing in this state...
several years ago. The Supreme Judicial Court is reviewing the issue now, but probably won’t make a final decision for months. Meanwhile, the Massachusetts Gaming Commission is expected to award the first license, the one for the slots parlor, at the end of this month.

If the SJC sides with the casino critics, there’s a good chance the casino law repeal will make it on the ballot. If that happens, there’s surprisingly little room for error — at least based on this new Suffolk poll.

Each casino operator that has made it this far in the application process has had to win over voters in a municipal referendum. Persuading an entire state of voters could be a different type of gamble.
An insiders’ game for Democrats

WHEN IT comes to deciding who can run for office, Massachusetts Democrats aren’t very democratic.

Any statewide candidate who wants to be listed on the Democratic ballot first must win support from 15 percent of some 5,000 delegates who are expected to gather at the state convention in June. In other words, party insiders will decide who “wins” the convention endorsement by garnering the most votes, who loses it, and who is barred completely from the ballot.

The way it looks now, as delegates are being chosen through local party caucuses, Attorney General Martha Coakley and state Treasurer Steven Grossman will be vying for the most support in Worcester. Lesser-known candidates such as Joseph Avellone, Donald Berwick, and Juliette Kayyem may or may not meet the 15 percent threshold. If they don’t, they’re done.

This is an unusual nominating process and a bad one. It puts too much power in the hands of activists and takes power away from the people, who never get a chance to challenge each other.

The Democrats who would be governor this year and March 2, have any bearing on the 2014 Democratic gubernatorial contest. Last week, Grossman’s campaign distributed via e-mail a National Journal piece that was headlined “How Martha Coakley Could Lose Again.” The story suggested that Coakley could lose the convention endorsement to “the better-networked” Grossman and such a loss “could convey a sign of weakness for a candidate who already has a lot to prove.”

At the moment, Coakley is crushing her rivals in the polls; a recent Suffolk University/Boston Herald poll gave her a 45-point lead over Grossman. So anything that suggests weakness is a plus for her would-be opponents. It’s especially helpful to Grossman, who is anxious to cast himself in the role of Deval Patrick in 2006. That year, Patrick won the convention endorsement in a surprise victory over the perceived front-runner, Attorney General Thomas Reilly.

As for who is up or down in actual delegate-gathering, I confess, the multiweek caucusing process is one I have never tried to penetrate or understand. There’s only so much insider politics a person can digest. So I will go with the conclusions of Boston Magazine’s David Bernstein — a noted caucus savant — who believes there’s “no doubt” Grossman won the first weekend.

Congratulations, Steve! And now, why should that result, along with the results of all the caucusing that will happen between now and March 2, have any bearing on which Democrats make the ballot?

The Democrats who would be governor have gathered thousands of signatures. They have already raised and spent lots of money. They are shaking hands in the February snow. They have websites and position papers. They are attending forums to run unopposed in the Democratic primary.

It rallied the troops behind Warren and set her up for her ultimately successful run against Republican Senator Scott Brown. But as a witness to DeFranco’s demise, I found it sad to see someone so passionate about liberal Democratic causes muscled aside in that manner.

With or without DeFranco on the ballot, Warren had everything she needed to win — money, message, and celebrity appeal. Democrats just didn’t want the bother of an actual primary campaign and an election day get-out-the-vote challenge.

This insider game is already infecting the convention process works. When Elizabeth Warren was running for Senate in 2012, she received 95.7 percent of the delegate vote at that year’s convention. That kept her one rival, immigration lawyer Marisa DeFranco, off the ballot, allowing Warren
where voters and interest groups are asking questions and making up their own minds about who deserves their vote. Why should 5,000 so-called “activists” decide who earned the chance to get their name on the primary ballot?

That’s not democracy, by the people for the people. That’s the Massachusetts Democratic Party exercising power by taking power away from the people.

Joan Vennochi can be reached at vennochi@globe.com. Follow her on Twitter @Joan_Vennochi.
Tune in for poll results

Be among the first to hear the results of a new Suffolk University/Boston Herald poll on the governor's race by tuning into Herald Radio at 9 a.m.

Pollster David Paleologos will give the complete rundown on all the statewide races as well as issues including casinos, Obama-
Martha in front in chase for gov

By JOE BATTENFELD

Attorney General Martha Coakley has opened up a gaping lead over her Democratic gubernatorial rivals, putting her in position to block some of them from even getting on the primary ballot, a new Suffolk University/Boston Herald poll reveals.

Coakley, whose U.S. Senate loss in 2010 made her the object of national ridicule, is winning an impressive 56 percent of the vote in a crowded Democratic field, according to the new Suffolk/Herald poll of 600 likely Massachusetts voters.

The longtime attorney general leads her nearest competitor, Treasurer Steven Grossman, by a whopping 45-point margin, according to the poll. But Baker fares much better against the other Democratic candidates, beating Grossman by 5 points and the rest of the Democrats by double-digit margins.

On the Republican side, Baker has a commanding 64-30 point lead over primary opponent Mark Fisher.

The Suffolk/Herald poll, released yesterday morning on Boston Herald Radio, was conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 3 and has a margin of error of plus or minus 4 percentage points. The smaller subset of Democratic primary voters has a margin of error of 5.5 percentage points.

The poll also shows former state Sen. Warren Tolman leading the Democratic race for attorney general with 25 percent, but 56 percent of likely voters are undecided.

The Democratic race for lieutenant governor is even more wide open, with all of the candidates in single digits and nearly eight out of 10 voters undecided.

Other highlights of the poll:

- President Obama's popularity continues to sink, even in Democrat-friendly Massachusetts; just 51 percent of voters here have a favorable view of Obama, while 41 percent say they have an unfavorable opinion. His favorability has dropped by more than 25 points since May.
- Nearly 60 percent of voters say accused marathon bomber Dzhokhar Tsarnaev should get the death penalty if he's convicted.

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Here's how the candidates for governor stack up against one another, according to the latest Suffolk University/Boston Herald poll:

**AGAINST OTHER DEMOCRATS:**

- **COAKLEY:** 56 percent
- **Undecided:** 27 percent
- **Steve Grossman:** 11 percent
- **Juliette Kayyem:** 4 percent
- **Joseph Avellone:** 1 percent
- **Donald Berwick:** 1 percent

**AGAINST GOP's CHARLIE BAKER:**

- **COAKLEY:** 44 percent
- **Baker:** 31 percent

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Baker says he’s helping people get health care

By CHRIS CASSIDY

GOP gubernatorial hopeful Charlie Baker said he has personally helped frustrated Bay Staters sign up for health insurance after they’ve called his campaign office unable to enroll through the state's malfunctioning $69 million Obamacare website.

““Look, I’ve run enough races — some I’ve been successful at and others that I haven’t — that to me what’s most important is working hard toward the primary, which is what we’re focused on, getting people across Massachusetts around the values I think people want in the next governor,” Coakley told the Herald yesterday in an interview at her campaign headquarters.

Both Coakley and Baker said they welcomed the addition of independent Boston businessman Jeffrey S. McCormick to the race.

What readers said on our message boards at bostonherald.com:

**YOU react**

“Attorney General Martha Coakley is crushing her Democratic gubernatorial rivals and main Republican opponent...Just when you thought things couldn’t get worse.”
— semanresu

“Who would NOT expect any Demo-Tax-and-Spendocrat to be ahead at this point.”
— franktrades

“Coakley? Governor? Uh. I feel like I’m taking crazy pills.”
— TKLA

“I’m employed in biotech, so there are really only a few places that I can work ... I think we’re stuck here until we retire. Then it’s off to Vegas or Utah”
— Arthur Jackson
Spoilers throw lifeline to Dems

Could push Coakley past Baker in gov race

After her 2010 fiasco, can Martha Coakley really get 50 percent of Massachusetts to vote for her? Maybe not. But can she get 40 percent? Absolutely. And it could turn out to be all she needs.

A new Suffolk University/Boston Herald poll — first released on Boston Herald Radio yesterday — shows the attorney general is the overwhelming favorite among Democrats to be their nominee (polling 56 percent in a five-way race).

Her lead over Republican Charlie Baker, however, is just 44-31 percent. This despite findings in the same poll that a majority of Massachusetts voters still approve of the job President Obama is doing (that’s what a steady diet of PBS and the Globe-Democrat will do for you) and a plurality still favor Obamacare.

A Democrat below 50 percent in deep-blue Massachusetts should be good GOP news. Then there’s the fact that 2014 is already shaping up to be a bad year for Democrats. They’re likely to lose the U.S. Senate and certain to remain the minority in the House.

In Massachusetts, U.S. Rep. John “Snake Eyes” Tierney has an excellent shot at being the first Bay State House Democrat to lose to a Republican since 1994.

That’s the bad news. The good news?

Based on current math, Coakley’s 44 percent could be enough to make Martha our next governor.

Why? Two words: Jeffrey McCormick. He’s one of two independents campaigning for governor this year.

Neither he nor Evan Falchuk is particularly well known, but McCormick has everything he needs to make sure Democrats hold on to the corner office: Money.

He told the Herald he will spend at least $1 million of his own money running for governor.

Now, given the current state of the Massachusetts GOP, it’s completely possible that a well-funded independent could oust-er the Republican nominee.

It’s the current Massachusetts GOP, not the Massachusetts Dem-ocratic candidate works in the Bay State. Can you name a single Democrat running for statewide or federal office since 1994 (a GOP blow-out year) who hasn’t gotten at least 40 percent of the vote? I can’t.

Democrats start with a strong liberal base. That gets them into the 30 percent range without lifting a finger. And the “machine” vote — union workers and government hacks to round up low-info voters and herd them to the ballot box — and every statewide Democrat is guaran-teed 40 percent of the vote.

Coakley simply can’t run a campaign bad enough to fall below that floor.

Baker’s strategy thus far is a “make no waves” ap-
proach. Don't do anything that would stop you from being an acceptable alternative for independent and moderate Democrats tired of one-party rule.

But that strategy collapses if the anti-incumbent-party vote has three acceptable alternatives. If McCormick's millions buy him just 7 percent of the vote, and another three go to Falchuk, that leaves just 90 percent for Coakley and Baker to fight over. And Coakley starts with 40 percent. She's 5.1 percent away from a lock.

And that's before she buys a single TV ad. Or before female independent voters notice it's one woman running against three white guys.

No independent is going to break the 40 percent mark. Can Charlie Baker? Can he both overcome the Democrats' natural advantages and a vote-sucking insurgency?

A candidate leading a reform movement could. One who excited and inspired Massachusetts voters to rise up and take back the government on behalf of average, working families.

Is that Charlie Baker? Not yet.

Listen to Michael Graham 6 to 9 p.m. weeknights on BostonHeraldRadio.com. Follow him on Twitter @IAMMGraham. Talk back at letterstoeditor@bostonherald.com.
Roche summoned to closed-door meeting

By MATT STOUT and ERIN SMITH

Legislators investigating failures inside the Department of Children and Families are hauling Commissioner Olga Roche into another hearing tomorrow — but this time her testimony won’t be open to the public.

Roche will comply with the request to appear before an “executive conference” called by the House Committee on Post Audit and Oversight, DCF spokesman Alec Loftus confirmed yesterday.

Executive conferences may only be held to discuss an employee’s reputation or health; discipline, dismissal or complaints against an employee; litigation strategy; or property negotiations, according to House rules.

Committee Chairman state Rep. David Linsky (D-Natick) wouldn’t say why the closed-door hearing was being held two weeks after Roche answered legislators’ questions at a public hearing, only to say House rules allow for lawmakers to do probes in a “variety of different ways.”

Linsky’s committee is investigating DCF failures and policies which he has said he believes points to system-wide failures — a belief shared by 71 percent of respondents in a new Suffolk University/Boston Herald poll.

“I don’t need a poll to tell me that,” Linsky said. “I hear it at the Stop & Shop.”

The poll comes on the heels of a Herald report yesterday showing that people with rap sheets listing criminal convictions for armed assault, drug trafficking, motor vehicle homicide and even soliciting sex from a minor could be cleared to be foster parents under a state policy that allows workers flexibility to greenlight those with criminal records.

DCF officials said they’ve awarded “very few approvals” from its so-called “discretionary” lists of crimes, which feature more than 100 offenses.

Officials yesterday were still unable to provide exactly how many they’ve approved.

Gov. Deval Patrick said while foster parents “can have a record,” he defended the screening process.

— matt.stout@bostonherald.com
POLLSTER: DEMS HAVE WORK CUT OUT BEFORE CONVENTION

The state Democratic Convention in June will be make or break for the candidates for governor. With the first caucuses taking place in a few days, here is a recipe for what each candidate must do:

**Martha Coakley** — A polling powerhouse, at least right now, the attorney general must try to win delegates but also spread the wealth so that all three male opponents make the ballot. Having multiple men on the ballot was a winning primary strategy for Shannon O'Brien in 2002 — and Coakley herself in the 2009 Democratic primary for U.S. Senate. In both elections O'Brien and Coakley captured a plurality of Dems while their three white male opponents split the remaining vote. For the upcoming convention, Coakley may even have to “give” delegates to Joseph Avellone and Donald Berwick so that each makes the 15 percent threshold, which would set the field her way.

**Steven Grossman** — As a numbers guy, Grossman knows that women make up 55 percent of the Democratic vote. That’s why he opted out when he ran for governor against O’Brien in 2002 and couldn’t distinguish himself among the three other men on the ballot. This time, he’ll have the money and might to set the field his way — which means, when it comes to men on the ballot, fewer are better. And if he’s the only man, even better. Which would be bad news for Donald Berwick and Joseph Avellone. At the convention, the rule is that if you don’t get 15 percent of the voting delegates on the first ballot, you are out. So, hypothetically, if Grossman and Coakley receive 35 each, and Juliette Kayyem, Joseph Avellone...
and Donald Berwick each get just 10 percent, then the last three are knocked off the ballot. Grossman has to line up elected and non-elected delegates now, including ex-officio, youth and minority delegates to run up the score, Seattle Seahawks-style.

Juliette Kayyem — The former Homeland Security official has to earn her 15 percent the old-fashioned way because she won't get help from anyone else.

A Coakley-Grossman-Kayyem ballot sets Kayyem up for an "outsider" path to victory similar to Deval Patrick's back in 2006. Kayyem could make that contrast work at the convention against Coakley and Grossman. Kayyem's presence could level the gender playing field, although it risks tipping it in Grossman's favor with two women and one man on the September ballot.

Avellone and Berwick —
Nothing fancy, just get your 15 percent on the first ballot, however you can, or spend the summer at the beach. Winning the convention nomination outright is not an option and a waste of campaign time and money.
Dems, Baker square off on report

By HILLARY CHABOT

One Democratic gubernatorial candidate is blasting a nonpartisan congressional report that found Obamacare will lure 2.3 million people out of the workforce as “right-wing distortion,” while the top GOP candidate called the findings “alarming” — though a political expert said the Republican could benefit.

A recent Suffolk University/Boston Herald poll found voters are up in the air about the new Affordable Care Act, which has been plagued by a disastrous technical rollout and warnings of dire consequences.

A new Congressional Budget Office report shows that the increased availability of insurance means people wouldn’t have to take full-time jobs just to get coverage — reducing the incentive to work.

“This is another example of right-wing distortion of the facts,” said former Obama health care official Donald Berwick, who is among the second-tier candidates in the Democratic primary.

Berwick and fellow Democratic candidate Joseph Avellone largely parroted White House spokesman Jay Carney, who cast the glum findings as indications that full-time employees will have “the freedom and choice and opportunity that they lacked,” to leave their jobs.

Attorney General Martha Coakley, the leading Democrat in recent polls, avoided directly addressing the nuclear report, indicating via a spokesman that her “first priority would be to create good-paying jobs and grow our economy,” and that she would “work to make sure that the ACA supports these goals.”

But leading GOP candidate Charlie Baker said he found the report “alarming.”

“Massachusetts needs — and deserves — a waiver from the federal law so that our families can keep their plans, workers can keep their jobs, and we can continue to be a leader in health care coverage,” he said in a statement.

The report likely will help Baker, said Boston University political historian Tom Whalen.

“It’s a nonpartisan group, so Democrats can’t really get away from the findings,” he said.

“It’s certainly a meaty issue for a Republican like Charlie Baker to dive into.”

— hillary.chabot@bostonherald.com

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More pols back death penalty for Tsarnaev

More pols are coming out in favor of U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder’s decision to seek the death penalty against accused Boston Marathon bomber Dzhokhar Tsarnaev — breaking with many of the Bay State’s hand-wringing Democrats as Congress prepares to release an exhaustive report on the Boston Marathon bombings.

“He should get the death penalty if found guilty,” former U.S. Sen. Scott Brown told the Herald yesterday. Brown joins Democratic U.S. Rep. Stephen Lynch and most of the voters in calling for Tsarnaev’s life if he is convicted in the dual bloody bombings that killed three and injured hundreds, as well as the killing of a Massachusetts Institute of Technology police officer.

“I believe that Attorney General Holder has correctly applied the law to the particularly heinous, depraved and premeditated attacks against defenseless victims,” Lynch said when federal officials announced their decision to seek the death penalty last month. “Capital punishment should be reserved for extreme cases — sought only as punishment for the most heinous and evil of crimes. Given the circumstances in the Boston Marathon bombings — a premeditated terrorist attack on innocent victims on American soil — I believe that this most extreme punishment should be available to the jury.”

Republican Richard Tisei — who is running against U.S. Rep. John Tierney (D-Salem) — also said he backs capital punishment for Tsarnaev.

A Suffolk University/Boston Herald poll showed that 59 percent of likely voters in Massachusetts said they believe Tsarnaev should face the death penalty if convicted. Only 28 percent of the 600 likely voters polled said they disagreed with Holder’s decision. U.S. Rep. William Keating (D-Buzzards Bay) is expected to release a report this month revealing more details about the brutal attack.

Most top Democrats have boldly tiptoed around the issue.

Patrick, leading the charge, stated unequivocally: “One way or another, based on the evidence, Tsarnaev will die in prison.” U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren, masterfully having it both ways, said, “While I personally oppose the death penalty, I respect the attorney general’s decision in this case as the United States seeks justice for this heinous crime.”

U.S. Rep. Joseph P. Kennedy III added his name to the growing list of anti-death penalty process respecters yesterday, saying, “While I don’t support capital punishment, I respect the decision of federal prosecutors.”

“I have full faith that the U.S. justice system will ensure Dzhokhar Tsarnaev never again harms innocent people,” he said.
By late October, a Suffolk University/Boston Herald survey showed East Boston men voting 51-34 percent in favor of a casino, while women rejected it 49-42. That poll was fielded before the final weekend when the bottom fell out on the “yes” side, and Eastie rejected the casino by a decisive 56 percent to 44 percent.

Our February statewide poll results showed the same trend: Men support having casinos in Massachusetts by 56 percent to 32 percent, while only 45 percent of women favored them.

Another factor on today’s referendum vote: the impact of women is directly correlated to how Democratic a city or town is. The higher the Democratic registration, the higher the impact of women on any particular race or ballot question.

And Revere trends even more Democratic than the rest of the state. Despite voting for Republicans like Scott Brown and Paul Cellucci in past elections, 48 percent of registered Revere voters are Democrats, compared to just 36 percent statewide; and just 7 percent are Republicans, versus 11 percent GOP statewide.

All of which seems like bad news for the proponents of the Suffolk Downs/Mohican Sun bid. Last November, the Revere vote was 61-39 percent in favor, but it won by just over 2,300 votes.

With higher scrutiny and a failed East Boston vote, opponents are banking on women making this vote much closer.

But that depends on whether some Revere leaders flip to the "yes" side.

Enter former state Rep. Kathi-Anne Reinstein, an ardent casino supporter who represented Revere for 15 years. Now a lobbyist for Boston Beer Co., makers of Sam Adams beer, Reinstein, who once worked at Wonderland dog track, could be a key to keeping the proposed casino from a drubbing by women, registered Democrats and progressives.

Reinstein's support could help swing Revere PTO mothers interested in better schools to the "yes" side. The promise of casino funds for Revere schools could be too strong for them to resist.

Likewise, Reinstein also has cachet among elderly women in the city. And many of them are already lobbying fellow elders on the casino-related benefits of a new senior center, additional police and fire, and better roads, not to mention water- and sewer-rate relief.

Reinstein went against the odds, and her own polling, years ago and supported gay marriage in the predominantly Catholic city. Her backing on Mohican Sun's proposal could trump the trend among women to vote against casinos.

Either way, when the polls close at 8 tonight, women will decide whether Revere approves the Suffolk Downs/Mohican Sun bid. We’ll see which side lady luck is on.
role in reasons massachusetts elections. could they be the key to revere
casino vote happening as we speak? joining from our beacon hill studio is
david. director suffolk university political research center. good to see
you. thanks for having me. what will happen tonight if there’s a
predominantly female voter turn out here? >> well it really depends on
how, how intense the turn out is and how passionately women feel. the
dau at that that we do have, which is boston city-wide. boston east boston
only and state-wide all show that women are a little bit more cautious and
apprehensive of casinos than

nothing’s impossible. but it certainly an up hill fight. we will leave it at that
and know of course a lot more after polls close 8 o’clock. david, director
of suffolk university political research center. thanks for joining me.
thanks. i’m fox 25 commentator jim polito. oscar season, i’m handing out
an award for the best actin

Items in this report: 2
Total Local Viewership: 82,316
Total Local Market Publicity Value: $4,431.28
that opinion the favorable unfair will break took 35 percent favorable 40 percent unfavorable but he still has a ways to go on terms of in recognition barriers Suffolk University pollster Dave Pale Ale Lager ups WBZ this time to 42 view paid a visit to our web site today CBS Boston dark on their your here from John Matthew we fix the federal government is in the Stone age when it comes to cyber secure our political analyst Jon Kalish says elections are not like choosing but say a soup ahead their view Word of the one ring itself on scare we'll be checking in the CBS Boston dot com you will new although the law on easy

your cell phone. vick victoria warren, 7 news. >> on to the race for governor in massachusetts. a new poll from suffolk university shows the race the democratic nomination is not even close. martha coakley has a 46 point lead over her nearest competition. race is much closer within the matchup with republican candidate charlie baker but coakley leads that potential contest by more than 10 points. new entry into the race for governor could be a game changer. venture capitalist jeff can relate to people.

comments today during a question and answer session at suffolk university law school. there's a new face in the race for governor in massachusetts - and that face is totally new to politics in the bay state. he's a successful venture capitalist - running as an independent. and our political reporter alison ng caught up with jeff mccormick today. jeff mccormick's venture capitalist firm launched companies like boston du tours and his bio diesel firm twin rivers technologies in quincy. he wants to bring his job creation ability to the bay

sasha pfeiffer in boston a new poll out today finds state attorney general martha coakley the heavy favorite to win the democratic primary for governor the boston herald suffolk university poll shows that fifty six percent of democrats now favor coakley falling far behind state treasurer steve grossman with eleven percent support the catholic archdiocese of boston is suspending a retired priest do accusations of child sexual abuse in the nineteen seventies , joseph byrne was the subject of previous allegations in twenty twelve spokesman finessed isis says those accusations were unsubstantiated and no criminal charges were filed economic confidence among massachusetts corporate leaders is virtually unchanged
tested in a poll released earlier today... i'm joined by the pollster, david paleologos, director of the suffolk university political research center. 1. poll result and edit 2014 contest for ma governor likely voters who never heard of' martha coakley 3.6 % charlie baker 22 % steve grossman 36 % juliette kayyem 69 % mark fisher 71 % jeffrey mccormick 73 % source: suffolk/boston herald 2. poll result and credit 2014 contest for ma governor democratic primary preference
Local Viewership: 26,435  Local Publicity Value: $1,664.75

>>> the massachusetts governor>> the massachusetts governor's race
kicking into high gear. martha coakley pulling ahead in the democratic
field. according to the new suffolk university herald poll. has 56% vote in
the democratic field of 600 likely massachusetts voter. steve grossman
second with 11%. 27% of voters currently undecided. the pole has
coakley beating gubernatorial favorite charlie baker by 41 to 33%. >>>
house lawmakers are preparing a vote on whether to expel jailed state
representative carlos henriquezrepresentative carlos henriquez. last night
egy gez left in handcuffs. the state ethic committee

WFXT-BOS (FOX) 2/6/2014 9:05:57 AM
Boston, MA
FOX 25 Morning News
Local Viewership: 52,790  Local Publicity Value: $2,387.14
that was lost. >>> new this morning a new poll is revealing it might be
harder for casino companies to open up stop in the bay state than they
originally thought. suffolk university survey found 37% of likely voters
said they would disapprove plans to open up plans to approve casino.
majority said they were opposed to casino gambling, period. previous pole
found state residents wanted a casino but not in their town. if the question
hits the november ballot it could unseat the state's 2011 law that allows up
to three casinos here. >>> now you're up-to-date. time for the morning
exchange.

WSHM-SPR (CBS) 2/6/2014 4:02:43 PM
Springfield, MA
CBS 3 News
Local Viewership: 3,010  Local Publicity Value: $212.42
dog-racing in 2008, when that industry had been established for years.
"how could mere applicants for a license be able to prevent a vote if the
court found that previously?" and, abdow believes a recent suffolk
university poll proves his side has a real fighting chance if they're allowed
on the ballot. "only 51 percent of likely voters approve of this legislation.
that is without any money being spent to educate people about the
concerns of casinos in massachusetts." one question that comes to mind

WSHM-SPR (CBS) 2/6/2014 4:34:56 PM
Springfield, MA
CBS 3 News
Local Viewership: 6,924  Local Publicity Value: $479.18
the vote takes place. abdow says the state already voted to take away
dog-racing in 2008, when that industry had been established for years.
"how could mere applicants for a license be able to prevent a vote if the
court found that previously?" and, abdow believes a recent suffolk
university poll proves his side has a real fighting chance if they're allowed
on the ballot. "only 51 percent of likely voters approve of this legislation.
that is without any money being spent to educate people about the
concerns of casinos in massachusetts." as of now, the commission plans

WWLP-SPR (NBC) 2/6/2014 5:11:22 PM
Springfield, MA
22News at 5PM
Local Viewership: 34,785  Local Publicity Value: $2,325.41
22news reporter matt caron joins us live from our hampshire county
bureau with the results of a new poll that may surprise you. this poll was
conducted by suffolk university and the boston herald. it found that here in
massachusetts, more than half...53%, of likely voters supported the
legalization of marijuana. 37% were opposed. according to the director of
the suffolk university political research center, the actual support may be
even higher than that. he says this mid-term poll is made up of more
conservative voters than in a presidential election. 22news asked people
in hampshire county if they would support full legalization of pot.

WSHM-SPR (CBS) 2/6/2014 6:02:14 PM
Springfield, MA
CBS 3 News
Local Viewership: 7,183  Local Publicity Value: $610.08
take away dog-racing in 2008, when that industry had been established
for years. "how could mere applicants for a license be able to prevent a
vote if the court found that previously?" and, abdow believes a recent
suffolk university poll proves his side has a real fighting chance if they're
allowed on the ballot. "only 51 percent of likely voters approve of this
legislation. that is without any money being spent to educate people about
the concerns of casinos in massachusetts." as of now, the commission
plans on awarding a slots parlor license on february 28th. the resort-
casino licenses will likely be awarded by may of this year. live downtown,
hugh as of now, the commission plans on awarding a slots parlor
ballot question. in a couple of months, the state supreme judicial court will
decline if residents will have a chance to vote to remove the law. one anti-
casino group says a recent suffolk university poll shows they would have a
fighting chance. "only 51 percent of likely voters approve of this
legislation. that is without any money being spent to educate people about
the concerns of casinos in massachusetts." as of now, the commission
plans on awarding a slots parlor license on february 28th. the resort-
casino licenses will likely be awarded by may.

A man involved in a car

...
Suffolk University/Boston Herald Poll coverage also appeared in the following outlets:

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Global Post Boston MA
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