



Memorandum

To: McCollum for Governor Leadership Steering Committee
McCollum for Governor Statewide Finance Chairmen and Committee Members

From: Matt Williams, McCollum for Governor Campaign Manager

Date: January 22, 2010

Re: Strategy Memo: Massachusetts Momentum and the Changing Political Landscape

Following a tremendous victory for Senator-Elect Scott Brown in one of the bluest states in the nation, I want to take this opportunity to update you on the nation's changing political landscape, what it means in the Sunshine State and Bill McCollum's path to victory in the Florida gubernatorial race.

Political Landscape Going into 2010:

Coming on the very eve of the first anniversary of President Barack Obama's Inauguration, the astounding upset in this week's Massachusetts Special Election reveals an electorate clearly frustrated with President Barack Obama's liberal policy agenda and partisan gridlock in Washington.

According to a memo from U.S. Senator John Cornyn (R-TX), released this week by the National Republican Senatorial Committee:

"Senator-elect Scott Brown's positive vision for the state ran contrary to Martha Coakley's negative attacks and unwavering support for the Democrat establishment in Washington. And Brown's message resonated with Massachusetts families, seniors, and small business owners who have rejected President Obama's massive health care takeover and the Democrats' failed stimulus debacle."

Unrest over the failed economic policies of Barack Obama, Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid is spreading in Florida as well. Today, the state's Agency for Workforce Innovation released the latest unemployment figures, showing the state's unemployment rate is 11.8 percent, the highest rate since May 1975. Currently 1,087,000 Floridians are out of work.

Soaring unemployment figures here and across the nation are a clear indication the Democrats' risky and expensive economic policies aren't working for Sunshine State residents.

By the Numbers:

The election math illustrates the level of voter dissatisfaction with the status quo in Washington. When voters in the Bay State headed to cast their ballots for the next President of the United States in November of 2008, Barack Obama handily won their 12 electoral votes by 27.5 percentage points.

Scott Brown's convincing victory on Tuesday was a 180 degree turn in just 365 days, besting Martha Coakley by more than 5 percentage points – 51.9 percent for Brown to Coakley's 47.1 percent.

The results out of Massachusetts trend with recent public polling numbers in Florida that show a drop in approval ratings for President Obama, Democrats in Washington and the liberal agenda. A mid-December Rasmussen Reports survey of Florida voters showed 55 percent disapprove of the President's job performance, with 46 percent strongly disapproving.

Health Care "Reform": The 800-Pound Gorilla in Voting Booths

If the Massachusetts Special Election was a referendum on the Democrats' over-reaching and increasingly unpopular agenda, the national health care debate was at the center of the storm. Strategists and pundits – of all political stripes – across the country agree that the Democrats' aggressive measures to quickly ramrod President Obama's big-government health care legislation through Congress played a key role in the resounding defeat of Attorney General Martha Coakley. Results from Massachusetts show fear of federally mandated health care drove independents to the polls.

In an exit poll conducted by Rasmussen Reports, 56 percent of the people that voted on January 19, cited health care as the most important issue to them in this race. According to Rasmussen, "One key to Brown's victory is that 41% Strongly Opposed the plan while just 25% Strongly Favored it."

Florida has seen similar trends in opposition to Democrats' health care plans. In an October poll commissioned by *The Miami Herald*, *St. Petersburg Times* and *Bay News 9*, and conducted by Schroth, Eldon and Associates, 47 percent of Floridians opposed the Democrats proposed legislation at that time, and just 40 percent supported it.

Alex Sink, the Obama Factor and Greedy Bankers

One factor that remains unknown at this point is the level of active campaign involvement President Barack Obama will have in Alex Sink's campaign.

As Senator Cornyn cites in the National Republican Senatorial Committee's post-special election memo, "...Obama has no coattails, as the Democrats have lost all three of the statewide elections that have taken place since his inauguration. Notably, Obama won all three of these states in 2008, and he campaigned for the Democrat candidates during the last week before their respective elections. Upon taking a closer look, the comparison between the most recent statewide races and the President's performance in Massachusetts, Virginia, and New Jersey in 2008 demonstrates an extremely challenging uphill trend for Democrats."

Boxed into a corner by the *St. Petersburg Times* less than 24 hours following the election of Scott Brown, Alex Sink was typically equivocal in answering questions about allegiance to President Obama and Washington Democrats – despite enjoying broad support from liberal special interests that include the trial lawyers, unions and E.M.I.L.Y.'s List, and having personally contributed to many well known Washington liberals, including Joe Biden, Barbara Boxer, Charlie Rangel, Hillary Clinton, John Kerry and Barack Obama.

When asked if President Obama would be welcome with her on the campaign trail, Alex Sink distanced herself from the titular head of her Party, saying, “Well, there'll be a lot of campaign activities. I'm angry about what I see going on in Washington just like a lot of other people are.”

We can expect much more of this obfuscation and subterfuge from the Sink Campaign in the course of the next 283 days.

Moreover, it is not particularly clear whether President Obama's strategists would even advise he appear with a candidate marred by a questionable professional history as a banker responsible for taking millions in bonuses while eliminating more than 7,000 jobs for hardworking Floridians.

Just yesterday in remarks regarding financial reform, President Obama held ‘fat-cat’ bankers responsible for the country's economic crisis, accusing them of taking “huge, reckless risks in pursuit of quick profits and massive bonuses.”

With President Obama and Vice President Biden traveling to Florida next week, just one day after the President's State of the Union address on Wednesday, we may soon have our answer.

Growing Momentum for Bill McCollum's Vision for Florida

As demonstrated by Bill's impressive performance in the final finance quarter of 2009, there is growing momentum for his vision for the future of our state. In recent weeks, the McCollum for Governor Campaign announced its best fundraising quarter yet, totaling \$1.4 million in contributions.

The fourth quarter brought a noticeable slide in support for Alex Sink, who announced an underwhelming total of just about \$1 million dollars in contributions. It is clear that her refusal to take a position on important issues affecting Floridians is negatively impacting her ability to raise money and negatively impacting her faltering campaign.

In Massachusetts, Scott Brown's independent mainstream agenda for the Bay State won the day, where he pushed core conservative values, including lower taxes, a strong national defense for our country and individual responsibility. These qualities and priorities mirror the principles that have guided Bill McCollum's service in the United States Congress and impressive record as Florida's Attorney General.

As President Obama and Congressional Democrats pursue an agenda defined by overreaching government programs – from health care, to cap-and-trade, to corporate bailouts – it is clear Alex Sink will

try to publicly distance herself from these unpopular policies while continuing to avoid positions on challenging and controversial issues.

Fortunately, Bill McCollum's agenda for Florida is crystal clear. As Governor, there is nothing more important than getting our residents back to work, and that will be his top priority. A McCollum Administration will advance policies to keep taxes low, create new jobs, diversify our economy and attract new businesses to the Sunshine State.

The Next 11 Months

The Massachusetts' results are a clear indication that in these uncertain times - marked by soaring unemployment and growing deficits - voters will not settle for smoke and mirrors and attempts to duck challenging issues. Now is the time to elect strong, principled leadership for our country's future.

During the course of the next 11 months, Bill McCollum will travel our state to share his vision for the future of Florida and address the issues that matter most to our voters. As we move closer to Election Day in November, Bill McCollum's job-creating agenda will continue to resonate with Florida voters.

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