

For Immediate Release

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Patrick Leads Healey By Wide Margin Out of the Gate

North Andover, MA (September 25, 2006) – **Overview of Bay State Poll Results:**

Patrick Out In Front

In a match-up of gubernatorial candidates, likely voters in Massachusetts favored Democrat Deval Patrick (54.2%) over Republican Kerry Healey (20.9%), with 19.1% Undecided. Independent candidate Christy Mihos received 5.3% support, while Green Rainbow candidate Grace Ross garnered less than 1%.

Big Dig Woes Worsen

The percentage of respondents who think major problems with the Big Dig are very or somewhat likely has increased from 81% to 91% compared to 1½ years ago. 86% feel the Big Dig has harmed our state's reputation quite a bit or some.

Uncertainty on Health Insurance Reform

About half (49.2%) of state residents are aware of the recently passed health insurance reform. Of those, 2 in 3 believe that it this reform will not affect the ease and expense involved in their personally obtaining health insurance.

MA Efforts on Terrorism Get Mixed Reviews

44% of state residents think our state is doing all it reasonably can to prevent terrorist attacks. 41% think Massachusetts should be doing more.

More Funding Seen As Answer for Schools

Increasing funding to existing public schools is preferred (by 43% of state residents) over other strategies for improving education in the state.

These findings come from the Bay State Poll, a survey of Massachusetts's residents, conducted by the Center for Public Opinion Research at Merrimack College. **Five Hundred and Five (505)** randomly selected state residents over the age of eighteen were interviewed by telephone **September 20th - 24th, 2006**. The survey's margin of error is +/- 4.5 %, although for sub-samples the margin for error is higher as noted. Detailed results and methodological information are available at www.merrimack.edu/polling.

The Governor's Race

If the election for governor in Massachusetts were being held tomorrow, for whom would you vote: Kerry Healey the Republican, Deval Patrick the Democrat, Christy Mihos the Independent, or Grace Ross the Green Rainbow candidate?					
	Healy	Patrick	Mihos	Ross	Undecided
Total	20.9%	54.2%	5.3%	0.5%	19.1%
By Party Identification					
Democrats	6.1%	84.1%	0.8%	0.5%	8.5%
Independents	18.1%	46.1%	8.9%	0.6%	26.2%
Republicans	70.9%	16.5%	3.2%	0.0%	9.4%
By Ideology					
Liberal	5.5%	84.2%	4.9%	0.0%	5.4%
Somewhere in Between	16.9%	51.3%	5.2%	0.8%	25.7%
Conservative	49.8%	29.9%	6.1%	0.0%	14.2%

Sample of 433 probable voters with a margin of error of +/- 4.9%

Big Dig

Now turning to a couple of issues facing Massachusetts, how much do you feel that the problems surrounding the Big Dig have harmed our state's reputation nationally? Would you say these problems have done a great deal, some, or not much damage to our state's reputation nationally?	
A Great Deal	51.4%
Some	35.1%
Not Much	11.7%
Don't Know	1.9%

How likely do you think it is that there will be (further) major structural problems with the Big Dig tunnel?		
	February 2005	September 2006
Very Likely	52.6%	55.9%
Somewhat Likely	28.8%	35.0%
Not Very Likely	13.0%	6.4%
Don't Know	5.5%	2.6%

Health Insurance Reform

As you may or may not know, Massachusetts recently enacted a major health insurance reform. Are you aware of this reform or haven't you heard much about it?	
Aware of It	49.2%
Haven't Heard Much About It	49.8%
Refused	1.1%

Asked only of respondents who were aware of the health insurance reform (N=260, MoE=6.4%)

From what you know about the program, do you expect that it will . . .	
Make it easier and less expensive for you personally to get health insurance	11.2%
Make it harder and more expensive for you personally to get health insurance	13.6%
Not affect the difficulty and expense involved in you personally getting health insurance	66.7%
Don't Know	8.5%

Efforts to Combat Terrorism

Do you think the state of Massachusetts is doing all it reasonably can do to try to prevent further terrorist attacks, or do you think it should do more?		In your daily life how much would you say you have noticed government efforts to combat terrorism?	
Doing All It Can	44.4%	Quite A Bit	17.1%
Should Do More	41.3%	Some	42.0%
Don't Know	14.2%	Not Much	25.5%
		Not At All	13.3%
		Don't Know	2.1%

Improving Public Schools

Several ideas have been suggested to help improve our public schools here in Massachusetts. Of the following ideas, which do you think would have the biggest positive effect our public education system?	
Promoting higher standards through testing programs such as MCAS	9.9%
Expanding charter or alternative schooling options	12.5%
Increasing funding to existing public schools	42.8%
Increasing state oversight of local districts	3.3%
Restructuring schools at the local level	22.8%
Something Else	4.0%
Don't Know	4.8%