

# Election 2014

Choose a Race

Type a Town Name

Governor

Ballot Questions

N.H. Senate

## Governor

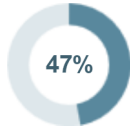
100% of precincts reporting

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DEMOCRAT

**Martha Coakley**

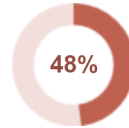
1,000,642 votes



REPUBLICAN

✓ **Charlie Baker**

1,040,682 votes



**Evan Falchuk**

71,086 votes

**3%**

**Scott Lively**

19,175 votes

**1%**

**Jeff McCormick**

16,116 votes

**1%**

BALLOT QUESTION 3

# Mass. measure to repeal casino bill fails

By **Mark Arsenault**

| GLOBE STAFF NOVEMBER 04, 2014



BARRY CHIN/GLOBE STAFF

Mary Boever celebrated in Everett on news that repeal of casinos had failed.

Voters emphatically upheld the state’s three-year-old casino law on Tuesday, on a bet that the casino industry can change the luck of two struggling cities and put thousands of people to work.

The electorate’s embrace of the gambling industry — following a one-sided, multimillion dollar campaign financed mostly by casinos — clears the way for Massachusetts’ first slot machines to begin spinning as soon as next summer.

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“We always thought we were going to win handily,” said Frank Callahan, president of the Massachusetts Building Trades Council. “The members have been really working hard. This will mean about 6,500 jobs.”

In the other ballot questions, voters decided to unlink the gas tax from inflation, overwhelmingly declined to expand the bottle bill, and approved a measure to allow workers to earn and take sick time under certain conditions

The effort to repeal the law, Question 3, trailed about 60 percent to 40 percent with 97 percent of the votes counted Tuesday evening. With repeal a bust, resort casino plans for Springfield and Everett can go forward, and a slot parlor could open in Plainville by June.

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“Clearly the money won out in this case,” said John Ribeiro, leader of Repeal the Casino Deal campaign. He said opponents may try again someday to ban the casino industry from Massachusetts.

Defenders of the casino law, backed by millions of dollars in contributions from casino companies, ran a tightly focused campaign this fall that included thousands of television ads highlighting the jobs the casino industry promises to create in Massachusetts.

Casino opponents, in turn, offered a buffet of reasons to vote for repeal, saying the gambling industry would take customers from small businesses, and increase gambling addiction, traffic, and crime. Opponents, however, lacked a rich corporate patron that could substantially fund the campaign, and did not raise enough money from small donors to finance a competitive media effort.

“They had no major players asking other major players for money, making the case for how there was a possibility to win,” said Springfield political strategist Anthony Cignoli, who closely followed the campaign.

With few resources, the repeal effort concentrated on building a volunteer army to run phone banks and hit the streets for door-to-door canvassing. Their strategy was to knit together local opposition groups that fought casinos in municipal referendums in 2013, and scored several victories despite being massively outspent in each case.

Lee Farrington of Chelsea, a 64-year-old social worker, said she did not consider herself an activist until the casino industry arrived in Massachusetts. “You can’t be a social worker without witnessing firsthand the ravages of addiction,” she said, speaking of gambling addiction. “It’s an extremely predatory industry and I’m furious that it’s even legal.”

But the anticasino “not-in-my-backyard” passion that fueled local referendum defeats of casino proposals seemed to be diluted in a statewide referendum.

“You’re not going to get people excited if it’s not in their backyard,” said the Rev. Richard McGowan, a Boston College casino specialist.

In addition to money, the casino companies also had a populist and easy-to-understand political argument: creating jobs, said Jerold Duquette, a professor of political science at Central Connecticut State University and a Western Massachusetts resident.

“You can’t discount the value of that affirmative casino argument,” he said.

The 2011 Massachusetts casino law authorized up to three resort casinos, no more than one in each of three regions of the state, and one slot parlor.

Penn National Gaming is midway through construction of the slot parlor in Plainville, after choosing to break ground last spring despite the threat of repeal. The risk paid off for Penn: The company’s Plainridge Park parlor is due to open in mid-2015, more than six months sooner than if the company had delayed construction until the repeal was settled. Penn has committed to preserving harness racing at the site, the only functioning harness track in the state.

“We’re just so grateful to the voters for a chance to bring this project to fruition,” said Eric Schippers, a Penn senior vice president. “There was a lot on the line for us.” In addition to more than \$100 million already invested, “there were real people with real jobs.”

With repeal settled, the state gambling commission on Thursday will formally grant casino licenses to MGM Resorts for a proposal in Springfield, the commission’s choice for a Western Massachusetts resort; and to Wynn Resorts for a casino plan in Everett.

MGM plans to spend \$800 million to remake a section of downtown Springfield damaged by a tornado three years ago. Wynn plans to spend \$1.6 billion to clean and redevelop a polluted piece of industrial land on the Mystic River waterfront.

A casino resort license for Southeastern Massachusetts is scheduled to be awarded next year.

The repeal effort faced enormous hurdles to even get on the ballot, after Attorney General Martha Coakley’s office ruled last year that the measure was unconstitutional. Casino opponents appealed to the Supreme Judicial Court, while continuing to collect signatures to qualify for the ballot. The SJC ruled in June that the ballot question could go forward.

The ruling briefly elevated casino repeal to the forefront of public debate, but opponents could not build upon that momentum.

In addition to lacking money, the repeal effort did not have a well-known face working full time to overturn the casino law. Ribeiro was a relentless champion for his cause, but he is a private citizen without an established political profile. Scott Harshbarger, a former attorney general who advised the campaign, is well-known, but was never the full-time front-man for the effort.

In 2006, gambling opponents in Rhode Island defeated a proposed Harrah’s casino in a statewide vote, despite a record \$12 million in campaign spending by Harrah’s. Opponents

coaxed former governor Lincoln C. Almond out of retirement to chair the anticasinogroup, bringing near universal name recognition.



JONATHAN WIGGS/GLOBE STAFF

**Joseph Catricala, left, John Rogers, middle, and Elizabeth Fitzgerald looked at the disappointing results of their casino repeal efforts, while at Pockets Billiards Club in East Boston.**

## Results

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- Markey wins first full Senate term
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- In Lawrence, Lantigua loses bid to regain former House seat
- Mass. measure to repeal casino bill fails
- Mass. voters back paid sick leave, AP says
- Bid to expand Mass. bottle law soundly rejected
- Mass. voters eliminate gas tax indexing, AP says
- Dante Ramos: Sick leave brings out blue-state tendency
- Healey to take over as AG
- Bump staves off two challengers, keeps auditing job
- Galvin to remain Secretary of State

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