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What the 2026 Massachusetts Election Results Mean for Businesses and the State's Policy Agenda

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As expected, Massachusetts voters largely opted for continuity in Tuesday's general election, returning **Gov. Maura Healey** and **Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll** to a second term and preserving Democratic control of state government. Healey's reelection was not viewed as particularly vulnerable in a state where Democrats maintain a substantial statewide advantage, and her victory ensures that the administration will enter its second term with a familiar policy agenda and an established network of relationships across Beacon Hill.

The Legislature also remains firmly in Democratic hands as the election did not materially alter the basic balance of power on Beacon Hill. Democrats entered the election with overwhelming majorities in both chambers and most incumbents were expected to return. Absent any unforeseen developments, Sen. Karen Spilka is expected to continue as Senate president, and Speaker Ron Mariano is expected to remain House speaker. Both chambers will formally convene in early 2027 to elect their respective leaders for the new legislative session. Following those elections, Spilka and Mariano will oversee the selection of committee chairs and other leadership positions.

For the business and lobbying community, the significance of the election is therefore less about a change in political control than about continuity and the policy priorities of the Legislature and a second Healey administration. With the governor reelected and legislative leadership largely intact, issues that received significant attention during the first term—including housing and affordability, transportation infrastructure, economic development, health care, early education, climate and clean energy, and the state's fiscal position—are likely to remain prominent. The administration may have somewhat greater freedom to pursue its own priorities during a second term, particularly where it can assemble legislative coalitions around economic development and affordability.

The election also featured an unprecedented nine ballot questions, addressing a wide range of policy issues facing Massachusetts residents. The results below reflect approximately 80% of votes counted at the time of publication.

1. Public Records: Make most records held by the Legislature and Governor's Office subject to public records laws. PASSED
2. Public Defenders' Union: Allow Committee for Public Counsel Services (CPCS) employees to unionize and collectively bargain. PASSED
3. Top-Two Primaries: Eliminate separate party primaries; all candidates run in one primary, with the top two advancing. FAILED
4. Same-Day Voter Registration: Allow eligible voters to register or update their address on Election Day. PASSED
5. State Tax Revenue Cap: Change the formula limiting state tax revenue and require excess collections to be returned to taxpayers. FAILED
6. Conservation Funding: Dedicate certain sales tax revenues from sporting goods, recreational vehicles and golf courses to a new conservation fund. PASSED
7. Single-Family Housing: Require communities to allow single-family homes on qualifying residential lots of at least 5,000 square feet. TOO CLOSE TO CALL
8. Recreational Marijuana: Repeal the legal, regulated retail sale of recreational marijuana while allowing limited personal possession. FAILED
9. Firearms Law: Uphold the 2024 Massachusetts gun law, including expanded firearm regulations, licensing requirements and restrictions. PASSED

Bottom line: For those doing business before the Commonwealth, the election produces considerably more continuity than disruption. Gov. Healey will have another four years to implement her agenda, while House speaker Ron Mariano and Senate president Karen Spilka—or their respective successors if leadership changes—will continue to operate with large Democratic majorities. The more important questions for 2027 will therefore be which issues the administration chooses to make early priorities, how aggressively it uses its second-term political capital, and whether tensions within the Democratic caucuses affect the Legislature's ability to move major legislation.

Federal Congressional Delegation

Massachusetts also continues to send an entirely Democratic delegation to Washington. U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren returns alongside Sen. Ed Markey, who secured the Democratic nomination earlier this year and was heavily favored in the general election. The state's nine House seats likewise remain overwhelmingly — and, following the election, entirely — Democratic. The most significant change is in the Sixth Congressional District, where Rep. Seth Moulton's decision to challenge Markey created an open seat; Democrat Dan Koh emerged from the September primary and was favored to hold the seat for Democrats in November.

For Massachusetts businesses and organizations, the congressional delegation therefore remains a reliable Democratic bloc, although individual members will continue to differ substantially on issues ranging from fiscal policy and regulation to defense, health care, energy and federal funding for Massachusetts priorities. The delegation's influence will be particularly important as the Commonwealth seeks federal support for infrastructure, transportation, research, health care and other state priorities.

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