

VoteTrac

EVERY VOTE BY EVERY MEMBER OF THE MASSACHUSETTS HOUSE & SENATE

- **Vote descriptions in English, not in Statehouse as a 2nd Language**
- **Votes tagged to evaluate voting by issue**
- **Votes analyzed for you**
- **Bills and amendments, too – to show priorities and effectiveness**

One of the many benefits VoteTrac is our proprietary language describing votes. *Journals* of the House or Senate do not make it easy to figure out what was voted on. We wrote meaningful descriptions of every vote taken.

Here's **Journal language for a vote**: "*On adoption of an amendment (offered by Rep. XXX), in item 4800-0060 to the House Bill, making appropriations for the Commonwealth.*"

Here's **the VoteTrac description**: "*Question was on adopting an amendment (by Rep. XXX), to the general appropriations bill, to increase funding for child care by \$4 million.*"

We also crafted a search technique designed to meet the needs of the modern political campaign. Each vote description is tagged with issue codes.

- See a legislator's votes on all law enforcement measures, or
- A sub-set of the law enforcement cluster, such as votes just on guns and weapons
- See how one legislator voted with another legislator – a party leader, for example
- Call up votes by those that were missed

**We start with the raw votes:
The 'tax' subject code in this example, of a
fictitious state senator.**

Sen. "Barbara Lynn" on Tax Votes

#1 of 228	Bill # S1497	TOT	DEM	GOP
Date: 2/4/1993		Yeas: 28	28	0
Result: SUSTAINED		Nays: 9	0	9

Vote: SUSTAIN A RULING OF THE CHAIR

QUESTION WAS ON SUSTAINING A RULING OF THE CHAIR THAT AN AMENDMENT (RAUSCHENBACH/AMORELLO) TO THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY BILL, EXTENDING TAX CREDITS FOR LEAD PAINT REMOVAL, WAS BEYOND THE SCOPE OF THE BILL.

Member: LYNN, BARBARA Voted Y

# 2 of 228	Bill # S1497	TOT	DEM	GOP
Date: 2/4/1993		Yeas: 8	0	8
Result: REJECTED		Nays: 27	27	0

Vote: ADOPT AN AMENDMENT

QUESTION WAS ON ADOPTING AN AMENDMENT (LEES) TO THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY BILL, SUBSTITUTING TEXT OFFERED BY THE COMMERCE & LABOR COMMITTEE, TO RAISE THE PROPOSED INCOME TAX CREDIT FROM 1 TO 3 PERCENT.

Member: LYNN, BARBARA Voted N

# 3 of 228	Bill # S1497	TOT	DEM	GOP
Date: 2/4/1993		Yeas: 10	2	8
Result: REJECTED		Nays: 25	25	0

Vote: ADOPT AN AMENDMENT

QUESTION WAS ON ADOPTING AN AMENDMENT (LEES) TO THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY BILL, TO REMOVE THE SUNSET FEATURE AND MAKE THE PROVISIONS PERMANENT.

Member: LYNN, BARBARA Voted N

**Next, we analyze the raw votes:
The example below is the narrative on a
Senator's economic development votes.**

Partial Analysis **Senator “Frank Skeffington”** **On Jobs and Economic Development Votes**

Emerging Technologies

Although Gov. Romney spoke often about emerging technologies being the future of the state’s economy, Sen. “Skeffington” repeatedly voted to override the governor’s cuts to programs targeted aimed at supporting such businesses. See votes to restore \$100,000 for the Massachusetts Bio-Technology Research Institute, \$1.25 million for the Massachusetts Math, Science, Technology and Engineering Grant Program, \$20 million for the Massachusetts Research Center Matching Fund, \$5 million to recapitalize the Massachusetts Technology Development Corporation, \$12.5 million for the Emerging Technology Fund, \$7.5 million for the John Adams Innovation Institute, and \$1.2 million for the Mass Technology Transfer Center.

Sen. “Skeffington” favors stem cell research (crucial to the state’s bio tech industry) and voted to oppose an amendment sponsored by Sen. Hedlund (R-Weymouth) to strike a provision in the Economic Stimulus Bill (2003) that encouraged such research in Massachusetts.

Unemployment Insurance

One of the most important issues to businesses in Massachusetts, especially to larger employers, is the cost of unemployment insurance. With the exception of his vote in 1994 to extend unemployment insurance benefits eligibility to certain recipients, Sen. “Skeffington” has been a consistent supporter of efforts to hold down the cost of unemployment insurance premiums as advocated by the Associated Industries of Massachusetts, the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce and other business organizations.

See votes in favor of an amendment sponsored by Sen. Lees (R-Springfield) to a bill to freeze unemployment insurance rates in 1994 (estimated to save businesses \$12 million), legislation freezing unemployment insurance premium rates to avoid an automatic increase, modifying the rate schedule for the unemployment benefits fund (the bill was estimated to save businesses \$100 million in employer contributions that would have otherwise been required based on the jobless rate experience).

Each Report begins with an Executive Summary.

Senator “Frank Skeffington” Executive Summary

JOBS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Strong supporter of the tourism industry which is of particular importance to his district
- Voted for legislation to facilitate the construction of the Boston Exhibition and Convention Center in South Boston, as well as improvements to the convention centers in Worcester and Springfield
- Supporter of state initiatives to foster regional economic development
- Voted to override Gov. Romney’s veto of \$350,000 earmarked for regional economic development project
- Favored extending the Community Reinvestment Act to mortgage lenders
- Authored the Economic Stimulus Act of 2003
- Voted to override Gov. Romney’s veto of \$500,000 to make loans to women and minority owned businesses in targeted urban areas
- Generally supported public investment in private sports facilities (Yes to New Boston Garden and Foxboro Stadium; No to Fenway Park)
- Supported efforts to promote the growth of emerging technologies and repeatedly voted to override Gov. Romney’s cuts to programs to support such businesses
- Supports stem cell research
- With the exception of his 1994 vote to extend unemployment insurance benefits, has been a strong supporter of efforts to reduce the cost of unemployment insurance premiums to businesses
- Voted for deregulation of the electric industry, but supported union efforts to protect jobs
- Voted for mutual holding company legislation sponsored by the state’s mutual life insurance industry
- Supported targeted tax breaks for defense and mutual fund industries, as well as for domestic insurance companies, to both promote economic activity and to permit Massachusetts to remain competitive with other states
- Voted to repeal the prohibition on the sale of liquor on Sundays

**Other analyses available:
Your candidate versus Leader “Jones,” in the
example below – to measure voting
independence (or lack thereof)**

Senators 'Smith' & 'Jones' Voting Against One Another

#1 of 147	Bill # S1581	TOT	DEM	GOP
Date: 3/22/1993		Yeas: 13	5	8
Result: REJECTED		Nays: 20	20	0
Vote	ADOPT AN AMENDMENT			

QUESTION WAS ON ADOPTING AN AMENDMENT (BARRETT) TO SENATE RULES TO APPOINT A TEMPORARY BIPARTISAN COMMITTEE ON SCHEDULING.

Member: 'Smith' Voted Y Member: 'Jones' Voted N

#2 of 147	Bill #S1581	TOT	DEM	GOP
Date: 3/22/1993		Yeas: 12	5	7
Result: REJECTED		Nays: 20	20	0
Vote	ADOPT AN AMENDMENT			

QUESTION WAS ON ADOPTING AN AMENDMENT (BARRETT) TO SENATE RULES TO PROHIBIT SESSIONS AFTER DEC. 1 IN THE FIRST YEAR AND NOV. 1 IN THE SECOND YEAR OF BIENNIAL SESSIONS.

Member: 'Smith' Voted Y Member: 'Jones' Voted N

Bills and amendments analysed, as well.

This can be extremely difficult information to come by, but VoteTrac has it. See if a legislator cared enough about campaign issues to file bills on them. Did the walk, in other words, measure up to the talk?

From our 100-page Special Report on Scott Brown, prepared immediately after his election to the US Senate:

"Only seven bills that Brown filed over the course of his time at the State House were ever passed into law. The table below shows bills filed, bills passed and the resulting effectiveness percentage.

SESSION	BILLS FILED	BILLS PASSED	EFFECTIVENESS
1999-2000	7	5	71%
2001-2002	12	2	17%
2003-2004	14	0	0%
2005-2006	54	0	0%
2007-2008	45	0	0%
2009-2010	55	0	0%
TOTAL	187	7	3%

“In his most effective session, as a freshman Representative, Brown filed just seven bills, with five of them being signed into law. All the bills he filed were at the request of either municipalities or individuals.

“His success rate dropped dramatically as he introduced more controversial measures relative to sex offenders, the Department of Corrections, taxation, veteran's issues and campaign finance. Brown's failure to get his bills passed related both to their content - the vast majority of bills on contested issues are tabled - and the partisan nature of the Massachusetts legislature with its Democratic supermajority. Brown was able to get one bill folded into broader legislation relative to veteran's benefits.”

VoteTrac: The Instant Campaign

**Work Smarter
Not Harder**