

Patrick brings fairness to immigration reform

Dan Devine

Continuing to tackle divisive issues in the early weeks of his administration, Gov. Deval Patrick turned his attention last week to the hotly contested immigration debate with a pair of announcements reflecting an emphasis on common sense governance and adherence to the rule of law.

First, Patrick announced that he would officially rescind the controversial memorandum of understanding signed by outgoing Gov. Mitt Romney that would have added federal immigration law enforcement to the duties of Massachusetts state troopers.

Patrick rejected the policy, saying that the time and effort

of state police troopers are better spent working with local communities to combat violence, drug abuse and gun trafficking.

"With all that the State Police have to do to enforce the laws of this Commonwealth, I do not believe that it is either practical or wise to ask them to enforce federal laws as well," said Patrick. "That is the job of the federal government, and it should be done by the federal government."

Immigrant communities and communities of color had previously expressed concerns that the agreement Romney signed with U.S. Customs and Immigration Enforcement

(ICE) of the Department of Homeland Security in December — under which state troopers gained the power to, in the course of regular police duties, detain people they determine are illegal immigrants — could potentially lead to an increase in racial profiling.

According to Ali Noorani, executive director of the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA), the immigrant community — which makes up 14 percent

of the Massachusetts population and 17 percent of the state's workforce — breathed a collective sigh of relief upon learning that Patrick was following through on this particular campaign promise.

"It is important that the governor promotes an environment of trust between the immigrant

community and the police, regardless of the uniform," said Noorani. "Victims and witnesses of crime must be able to trust the police. This is especially important for the most vulnerable, like those suffering domestic violence. We must foster a climate of trust so that people can seek help without fear of families being torn apart by detentions and deportations."

A recent survey conducted by UMass-Boston's John W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy Studies found that large percentages of Latinos (19.5 percent) and blacks (17 percent) are concerned about the possibility of being deported. **Patrick, continued on page 19**

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— Gov. Deval Patrick



Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., addresses the MLK Jr. Scholarship Award Breakfast in Chicago on Monday. Obama took steps toward presidential candidacy, filing papers Tuesday to create a presidential exploratory committee. (AP photo/Charles Rex Arbogast)

Obama takes first step toward presidential bid

Nedra Pickler

WASHINGTON — Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., on Tuesday took the initial step in a presidential bid that could make him the nation's first black to occupy the White House.

Obama filed papers creating a presidential exploratory committee, a move he announced on his Web site, www.barackobama.com. He said he would announce more about his plans in his home state of Illinois on Feb. 10.

"I certainly didn't expect to find myself in this position a year ago," Obama said in a video posting. "I've been struck by how hungry we all are for a different kind of politics. So I've spent some time thinking about how I could best advance the cause of change and progress that we so desperately need."

Obama, a 45-year-old just over two years into his Senate term, is the most inexperienced candidate considering a run for the Democratic

nomination. He quickly rose to national prominence, beginning with his keynote speech at the 2004 Democratic National Convention and his election to the Senate that year, but still is an unknown quantity to many voters.

Two best-selling autobiographies — "The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream" and "Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance" — have Obama, continued on page 19



Mayor Thomas M. Menino, Democratic National Committee Chairman Howard Dean and Gov. Deval Patrick came together for the City Year City Heroes event held at Timilty Middle School on Monday. (Photo courtesy of the Mayor's Office)

Still more work to do

MLK's words help city leaders look to road ahead

Serghino René

Gov. Deval Patrick led a celebration of the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by calling for a renewed commitment to bridging racial divides and creating a more just society.

Patrick was sharply critical of the U.S. Supreme Court during his speech before hundreds of people gathered at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center.

The nation's highest court is now deliberating two cases involving school desegregation that legal analysts suggest could mark the end one of the crowning legal achievements of the civil rights movement — Brown v Board of Education.

"The United States Supreme Court is on the brink of rationalizing

justice right out of the law," Patrick said. "Their pattern seems to be a sort of pious acknowledgement of the existence of discrimination and then condemnation of any effort to do anything about it ... There's work left to do."

Patrick's remarks underscored a theme in speeches delivered on King's birthday, both in Boston and across the country, about the unfinished work left remaining in the civil rights movement.

"Race relations is the only major social ill we're facing in this country that we seem to be seriously considering curing by denial, as if declaring ourselves colorblind in law will make us colorblind in fact," Patrick said, repeating a mantra of "We have much work to do."

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