



# Mass. skepticism facing Patrick's economic speech

Steve LeBlanc

The way Gov. Deval Patrick sees it, Massachusetts has any looming national recession right where it wants it.

Rather just than ride out the slump, Massachusetts is poised to surge ahead of other states, according to Patrick, who was set to offer a roadmap through the dim economic times in what he billed as a major speech on Wednesday.

"We are talking about how we can position ourselves to not just weather ... but take advantage of some opportunities presented by the economic downturn," said Patrick, hoping to reassure a public jolted by the foreclosure crisis and turmoil on Wall Street.

He'll have plenty of skeptics in the audience.

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Massachusetts is one of a handful of states yet to recover the jobs lost during the last economic downturn. The state's population growth has also been stagnant.

Getting Massachusetts on surer fiscal footing will take more than happy talk or quick fixes, they said.

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"Our members are very concerned about economic conditions both in the state and nationally. A majority think that if we are not in a recession already, we are going into one," said Brian Gilmore, of the Associated Industries of Massachusetts, which represents 7,000 Bay State employers.

A survey released by the group showed business confidence in the economy sank to its lowest level in five years in March. Just 47 percent of Massachusetts employers were somewhat confident about economic prospects. The number has declined five straight months.

Adding to the worries is Massachusetts' inability to shake off the effects of the last downturn in 2002.

munity — sounded a familiar note to residents of inner cities around the country.

On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination, community leaders, activists and academics joined "Wire" creator David Simon at Harvard University last Friday for a panel discussion about how much — or how little — social and economic injustices among African Americans have changed since King's death.

Before a packed house at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, Simon said that the inspiration for the show came from his years working as a crime reporter at The Baltimore Sun, a position that gave him a first-hand look at these complex problems.

"It was hard to sell this show to HBO at first because the media

*'Wire,' continued to page 21*

# 'Wire' creator talks urban decline in Hub

Talia Whyte

Few television shows impact the way viewers think about their place in society; the critically acclaimed HBO drama "The Wire," which ended its five-season run last month, was one.

Although the series never found the high ratings enjoyed by some of the cable network's other flagship programming, the multifaceted drama developed a devoted audience that included many critics, who frequently called it "the best show on television no one is watching."

"The Wire" gained its notoriety for its realistic portrayals of the major players in the war on drugs. While the show took place in Baltimore, many of its recurring themes — substance abuse, poverty, crime, unemployment and the declining state of education in the black com-



Democratic presidential hopeful Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., speaks at the Mansfield-Metcalf Dinner at the Civic Center in Butte, Mont., on April 5. Obama and his chief rival for the Democratic nomination, Sen. Hillary Clinton of New York, are now sparring over endorsements from a number of superdelegates who could decide the fate of the presidential bid at the party's convention in August. For more Campaign 2008 coverage, turn to pg. 10. (AP photo/Alex Brandon)

"If there is a recession, Massachusetts tends to get in early and stays late getting out," Gilmore said.

Others echoed his concerns. "No one can recall if we've ever entered a second recession with-

out having recovered all the jobs from the previous recession," said Michael Widmer, president of the business-backed Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation.

Massachusetts' tepid recovery  
*Patrick, continued to page 7*



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. appears in deep thought at a press conference in Atlanta on April 25, 1967. At the press conference, King announced that he would not be a candidate for the

presidency of the United States, and predicted that both African American and white students would go to jail rather than fight in the Vietnam conflict. (AP photo)

# The question remains: What if King had lived?

Allen G. Breed

The preacher in him would have continued speaking out against injustice, war and maybe even pop culture. He would likely not have run for president. He probably would have endured more harassment from J. Edgar Hoover.

Four decades after the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. fell to an assassin's bullet, colleagues and biographers offer many answers to the question: What if he had lived?

For his children, however, the speculation is more personal. They know their lives would have turned out differently had they had their beloved father to guide and teach them.

Instead, history moves on, re-making the world in myriad ways.

The nation has grappled with issues of race and inequity without the benefit of King's evolving wisdom. A generation has come of age celebrating him in a national holiday, like other figures of the frozen past.

But given the trajectory of his life — from his appearance on the national scene during the Montgomery, Ala., bus boycott of 1955 to his death on a second-floor balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tenn., on April 4, 1968 — some of those closest to him have a good idea what King might be doing now, and where we might be as a country.

In the months before his death, King was speaking out against the growing U.S. involvement in Vietnam and was working with other

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