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Chairman's message: We must continue the good fight

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No state has had a more topsy-turvy political year than Massachusetts. It began in January with the election of Scott Brown to the United States Senate seat long held by the late Ted Kennedy. That election was the spark that set the country's political wires ablaze and turned conventional wisdom and the status quo upside down.

But while this trend continued in 49 other states on November 2nd, with incumbents being turned out left and right, Massachusetts once again went against the grain - this time by embracing conventional wisdom.

For over a year, Charlie Baker has been the merit shop community's clear choice for governor of Massachusetts. Among the many reasons for this support and ABC Massachusetts' endorsement of his candidacy were his tough, principled stand against project labor agreements (PLAs) and his consistent advocacy for a predictable tax and regulatory climate.

Unfortunately, Charlie Baker lost a tough race. Moreover, Mary Connaughton, who was endorsed by ABC, every major newspaper in the state and even the Providence Journal, was also defeated for State Auditor in an even closer election.

So where does all this leave us?

On a local level, it means your membership in ABC is more important than ever. ABC is the only trade association in Massachusetts that fights for your right to work and operate your business in a free and open marketplace.

Another outcome of this election is that, for the first time in many years, PLAs were a much-discussed issue in a gubernatorial campaign. The fact that major party candidates debated the issues important to contractors is no accident. ABC worked hard to force the issue with the Governor, the media, and candidates for office. We made your right to work a part of the conversation and we believe the industry as a whole is better for it.

On a national level, the soon-to-be Republican majority in the House of Representatives will effectively end any chance of the so-called "Employee Free Choice Act" becoming law any time soon. This is a huge victory for contractors across America.

Returning to Massachusetts, the state legislature will have nearly 40 new legislators, nearly half of whom are Republicans. Although this is little consolation compared to losing the statewide offices, it is a step towards establishing a more robust two party government in Massachusetts.

As chairman of ABC, I'd be lying if I ignored the enormous disappointment we all feel with the election results. However, we have no choice but to forge ahead and continue to fight for the issues we believe in - now more than ever.

Kyle Reagan is the 2010 chairman of the ABC-Mass. Chapter, Burlington and is with DECCO, Inc., Brookline, NH.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540