

Last week's stunning decision by Massachusetts voters to place a conservative into the U.S. Senate seat that was for over forty years the pulpit of liberal Democrat Senator Edward Kennedy certainly sent political shockwaves rippling across Washington, DC and the nation.

The come-from-way-behind victory by a relatively unknown Republican state senator has also resulted in plenty of speculation about the future of President Obama's aggressive agenda.

In the Senate, the Democrat's 60-seat super majority has just been pushed back to 59. The pick-up of the Massachusetts Senate seat now allows the Republican minority to initiate delaying tactics, including filibustering, in order to stall or block controversial legislation. Such parliamentary tricks don't exist in the House, but can be critical in derailing the Senate majority's increasingly unpopular legislative express.

While there had been talk of the Senate leadership delaying the official seating of Senator-elect Scott Brown until after a final vote on health care, that does not appear to be the case. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-NV, has pledged to accept Brown without delay. President Obama also called on Congress to hold off on any health care vote until Senator-elect Brown is seated. This is a welcome move.

The arrival of Scott Brown on Capitol Hill is - to use an overworked phrase - a political game changer. Already, the national media is reporting that the Obama administration is reformulating its legislative playbook for 2010 - focusing now on jobs and bolstering the economy, rather than advancing a controversial platform of reform legislation.

Unfortunately, this strategy doesn't mean that the administration's push for government run health care is going to be abandoned any time soon. Last week, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-CA, told reporters, "We will have a health care bill." "Regardless of what happens in Massachusetts, we will make it happen."

As you know, the administration and its House and Senate leadership have for months chosen to force their health care reform plan on the American people - meeting behind closed doors and breaking promises of openness and transparency. Frankly, it's just this kind of cavalier attitude by a liberal majority and the administration that has led the American people to rise up as we witnessed last week in the bluest of blue states.

As President Obama embarks on his second year in office, it's an appropriate time for him to stop and listen to the people and finally make good on his promise to grow jobs. Job-killing higher taxes, costly government energy mandates and a restrictive health care system will not stimulate our economy.

The American people are looking for leadership and the president can demonstrate a real commitment to our country's future by lowering taxes on small businesses, opening domestic energy sources for development, working with Republicans to truly reform health care without a government take over, and by taking steps to reverse out of control government spending.

There's still time, Mr. President.

### **Mobile Responds to Haiti:**

Hundreds of millions of dollars in donations have been pouring into relief efforts for Haiti in the wake of the devastating January 12 earthquake. Meanwhile, Mobile is playing a special role in bringing help to the suffering people of that Caribbean nation.

As the Press-Register reported on January 20, a Mobile-owned container barge laden with 2,110 metric tons of grain and basic food supplies was the first such relief vessel to arrive in the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince after the temblor.

Mobile-based Crimson Shipping Inc. owns the ship that came to Haiti's aid and it plans more such aid deliveries according to the report. As the news story noted, the Port of Mobile is not only serving as a conduit for relief, but should also provide a gateway for the delivery of much needed supplies to rebuild Haiti. Alabamians stand ready to lend a hand.

### **Monroeville Loses a Friend:**

Last week, south Alabama – and certainly the residents of the city of Monroeville – said a fond farewell to a truly remarkable lady, former Mayor Anne Hines Farish.

When Mr. Webster was writing his dictionary, he must have had Anne in mind when describing the epitome of a true Southern lady.

As the longtime mayor of Monroeville, Anne worked closely with former Probate Judge Otha Lee Biggs to help move Monroeville and Monroe County forward. A charming person who was always a joy to be around, Anne mixed humor and a passion for helping others with a love of everything that was Monroeville.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to Anne's family as they celebrate her remarkable life and mourn the passing of someone who was truly one in a million.

My staff and I work for you. If we can ever be of service, do not hesitate to call my office toll free at 1-800-288-8721 or visit my website at <http://bonner.house.gov>