



# Walsh surges ahead of Connolly in new Suffolk-Herald poll

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**By: Joe Battenfeld**

State Rep. Martin J. Walsh has staged a late rally in the race for Boston mayor, surging past opponent John R. Connolly in the final days of the historic battle to replace Mayor Thomas M. Menino, a new Suffolk University/Boston Herald poll reveals.

Walsh, who trailed Connolly by 7 points less than four weeks ago, now leads by a 46-43 percent margin, according to the poll of 555 very likely Boston voters.

Walsh's turnaround has been fueled largely by African American, Hispanic and other minority voters, who are breaking to Walsh by a 50-37 percent margin, the poll shows.

Walsh's 3-point advantage is within the margin of error but it's a clear sign that the Dorchester Democrat has the momentum heading into Tuesday's election. Just 9 percent of voters say they're still undecided.

The heated referendum fight in East Boston over a Suffolk Downs casino proposal also appears to be heading for a close finish.

A separate Suffolk/Herald poll of 300 Eastie voters shows the casino plan holding just a small lead, with 47 percent backing it and 42 percent opposed. That poll has a margin of error of plus or minus 5.65 percent.

Walsh's comeback in the marquee mayoral matchup has been boosted by a string of endorsements he's landed from former candidates Charlotte Golar Richie, Felix Arroyo and John Barros, according to the Suffolk/Herald poll. Walsh is now winning areas of the city where Richie, Arroyo and Barros did well in the Sept. 24 preliminary election, the poll shows.

The Suffolk/Herald citywide poll was conducted Oct. 29-31 and has a margin of error of plus or minus 4.2 percentage points.

In the race for City Council at-large, newcomer Michelle Wu is leading the field of eight candidates with 20 percent of the vote, according to the poll of very likely voters. Incumbent Ayanna Pressley is in second place with 16 percent, trailed by former mayoral candidate Michael Flaherty with 14 percent of the vote.

Incumbent City Council President Stephen Murphy is holding down a shaky fourth place with 10 percent, followed by Jeffrey Michael Ross at eight percent, and Jack Kelly and Annisa Essaibi George with seven percent each. The top four vote getters win the at-large council seats.