



## Democratic candidate holds DC fundraiser in closing days of campaign

*By CNN Political Editor Mark Preston  
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(CNN) – Democratic candidate Martha Coakley is raising money at a high dollar event in Washington Tuesday, one week before Massachusetts voters choose a successor to the late Sen. Edward Kennedy.

Coakley is holding a fundraiser at a Capitol Hill restaurant with top donors asked to raise \$10,000. The lowest donation requested is \$1,000, according to an invitation for the event obtained by CNN.

A Coakley spokesman said the fundraiser will be attended by members of the Massachusetts congressional delegation and will help the Democratic nominee answer attacks being made by third-party groups and individuals heading into the closing days of the campaign.

"Shadowy outside groups funded in secret by national Republicans with ties to Swift Boaters and the folks who did the Willie Horton ad have flooded Massachusetts with hundreds of thousands of dollars in false smears against Martha Coakley," said spokesman Hari Sevugan, who also serves as spokesman for the Democratic National Committee. "The Coakley campaign is meeting with members of the Massachusetts delegation to have the resources to fight back."

Sevugan would not say how much money the Coakley campaign hoped to raise at the event, or who would be attending other than members of the state congressional delegation.

A recent poll conducted on behalf of The Boston Globe shows that Coakley has a 15-point lead over her Republican opponent Scott Brown. But Democrats, concerned the race is tightening, are taking steps to try to bolster her campaign. The Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee sent out a fundraising plea Tuesday titled "Dead heat."

"The next five days will decide the fate of Ted Kennedy's seat," Sen. John Kerry, D-Massachusetts, writes in the e-mail. "Do we elect Martha Coakley – who will fight for jobs, our families and our communities as my Massachusetts colleague and the state's first woman senator, or Republican Scott Brown, whose allies in the right wing dream of holding a 'tea party' in Kennedy country?"

The DNC's Sevugan, along with Massachusetts and respected DC-based Democratic operative Michael Meehan, have both been recently dispatched to Massachusetts to help the Coakley campaign.

A spokeswoman for Brown said that his campaign raised \$1.3 million Tuesday in an Internet fundraiser. Brown has helped energize the Republican Party, which views this election as a way to stop Democrats from getting President Obama's health care bill approved in Congress. Democrats control the chamber by a 58-40, margin with two independents aligning themselves with the Democratic caucus. These two additional votes provide Democrats with the power to overcome Republican filibusters.

Evan Tracey, president of Campaign Media Analysis Group, said that the candidates and those seeking to influence this election are pouring money into television advertising.

Just in the last week, alone, Tracey estimates that Coakley has spent \$310,000 on television ads, while Brown has dedicated \$430,000 to TV commercials since Christmas Day. American Future Fund, an outside group opposing Coakley, has spent \$160,000 in the past week, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the Massachusetts Democratic Party just began airing ads on Tuesday. The Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee will also be airing television ads in the final stretch.

"The sudden competitiveness of this race is giving us a look ahead at what the 2010 election likely to resemble where money and outside groups will seek to influence races that have both state and national consequences," said Tracey, CNN's consultant on political advertising.