



## [I guess 77% is better than nothing](#)



*By Maria Ortiz Perez*

*January 21st, 2010*

[Add comment](#)

Mayor Sarno from Springfield hosted [a ballroom-style auction](#) to sell 34 tax-title properties and get them back to the city tax roll. 32 properties went, for a total of \$624,400 (the city was owed \$811,394 in delinquent taxes on the 34 sites, not including the accumulated interest and fees).

I guess getting back 77% is better than nothing... Call me cheap, but man, those 23% lost hurt a little bit...

What I would be curious to find out is the actions the new property owners will be required to take to make sure that those newly acquired properties don't just sit there. And I would also like to know what the criteria were to select the auction attendees. Just to make sure the properties will serve the interests of the community at large.

Sales pitch: Pioneer wrote an amazing paper on the lessons learned from Springfield on their asset management approach to [tax-title collection](#). Take a look!

Oh, and before I go, I have a BIG request: Next time Springfield sells property for 20K a piece, would someone let me know? My husband and I have been trying to buy a house for a while...

## [New Report on MA Reform](#)



*By Amy Lischko*

*January 21st, 2010*

[Add comment](#)

It's too bad that this new Cato report on health care reform in Massachusetts [http://www.cato.org/pub\\_display.php?pub\\_id=11115](http://www.cato.org/pub_display.php?pub_id=11115) is not in a policy journal like Health Affairs as many more people would read it. It certainly provides some interesting analysis and food for thought regarding the reform's outcomes. The results are in line with what I reported recently in the first chapter of Pioneer's series evaluating the reform [http://www.pioneerinstitute.org/pdf/100113\\_interim\\_report\\_card1.pdf](http://www.pioneerinstitute.org/pdf/100113_interim_report_card1.pdf)

The authors use CPS data to look at reductions in the uninsured, crowd-out from private to public coverage, and improvements in health. They provide some interesting data assessing the effect of non-response on insurance

questions pre and post reform. They posit that the misreporting of insurance status is greater given the mandate to have health insurance. Take a read and let me know what you think.

## [Sleeping through the election](#)



**By Jim Stergios**

*January 20th, 2010*

[1 comment](#)

Two quick hits on yesterday's election. One's obvious. The geographical coverage of Brown's victory is stunning. Coakley took western Mass, the tip of the Cape and most cities, but the rest of the state (again, the rest of the state went for Brown). Bad news for the Governor (no, scratch that – incumbents generally) with the 60+% of independents going for Brown.

Second thing that strikes me from the data is that the cities may have gone for Coakley, but they really sat this one out. Voter turnout as a whole was high, and averaged around 60% outside the cities. But it was only in the high 20s to mid 40s in the cities.

Boston 43%  
Chelsea 37%  
Fall River 38%  
Holyoke 36%  
Lawrence 28%  
Lowell 38%  
Lynn 38%  
New Bedford 35%  
Pittsfield 45%  
Springfield 32%  
Worcester 42%

Lowell went for Brown?! Wow. Feel free to comment away. I have to say that just having a competitive race (for the first time in a long time) made it so much fun.

## [NEA \\$1M to Kennedy Institute](#)



**By Jim Stergios**

*January 19th, 2010*

[Add comment](#)

From our Education Intelligence Agent:

The National Education Association board of directors approved a \$1 million donation from the union's contingency fund to the Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the United States Senate. The contribution will be made in \$200,000 installments over the next five years.