UMass Exit Poll Methodology

The sample for the exit poll was selected in three stages. First, a probability sample of towns/cities within Massachusetts was selected using stratification to ensure that different geographic areas and racial/ethnic groups would be represented in the sample. The four regional strata used were Western Massachusetts, Suffolk County, Central Massachusetts, and the North/South Shore Areas. Two towns were selected within each strata, and two additional towns were selected to ensure that Hispanics and rural voters were represented in the sample. Within each strata, towns/cities were selected with a probability proportional to the town/city's turnout in recent elections.

The second stage involved selecting precincts within the selected towns/cities. Precincts were randomly selected, with a probability of selection proportionate to the number of voters in the precinct. While we ultimately selected 10 precincts across the state, some precincts we selected vote at the same location as other precincts, which means we ultimately interviewed voters from 18 precincts across the state.

Third, at each precinct, voters were randomly sampled throughout the day as they left the polling place. Interviewers selected each Nth voter to be interviewed; therefore, each voter at a precinct had an equal probability of being selected for an interview. The value of N was determined by previous turnout at the precinct to ensure that approximately 200 voters would be selected at each location.

Each randomly selected voter was asked to fill out a brief self-administered questionnaire designed by students at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst under the guidance of Professor Brian Schaffner. When a voter refused, the exit poll interviewers recorded the gender, race/ethnicity, and approximate age of that voter to allow for additional weighting to account for nonresponse bias.

Our sample ultimately included voters at 18 precincts throughout the state of Massachusetts. The sample was weighted to adjust for the sampling.