

GOP lets Scott Brown fend for himself

Local Republicans outraged committee not giving more in Senate battle

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GOP U.S. Senate candidate Scott Brown has been all but abandoned by the same national Republican committees that pumped hundreds of thousands in campaign cash to former governors **Mitt Romney** and William Weld during their long-shot bids for U.S. Senate.

The snub has outraged local Republicans who say national conservatives should be jumping at the chance to nab the first open Senate seat in decades despite Brown's tough odds in the Jan. 19 special election.

"They need to give Scott a level playing field," said former state GOP chairman Peter Torkildsen. "It's one of those rare opportunities that a Republican has a good shot in Massachusetts."

But even Brown has downplayed his lack of national GOP firepower in his race against Democrat Martha Coakley, saying, "We're doing very, very well on our own, and I don't want to be beholden to anybody at this point."

Colin Reed, spokesman for the National Republican Senatorial Committee, said, "I would never say how much we're going to spend or not spend on a candidate publicly. I wouldn't detail our battle plans."



Photo by Angela Rowlings

Local operatives say the national GOP and the NRSC have donated voter lists, telephone systems and at least \$50,000 to Brown's effort.

But that support is barely a blip when compared to the intense GOP involvement in the unsuccessful but vigorous Romney and Weld Senate bids.

In 1994, NRSC's leader, then-Sen. Phil Gramm, vowed an "all out effort," during Romney's underdog battle against Sen. Edward M. Kennedy. The national party boosted Romney's campaign coffers by \$540,000 - the legal limit - in so-called coordinated spending.

National GOP committees and big-money donors funneled cash to Weld during his 1996 race against Sen. **John Kerry** through GOPAC, a political action committee, and wealthy backers of former House Speaker Newt Gingrich. Weld was also feted that year at a \$1,000-a-person GOP gala in Washington, D.C.

While several local GOP party operatives are quietly grumbling that the RNC and the NRSC haven't given Brown, a Wrentham state senator, enough help to mount a serious challenge for the open Senate seat, Bay State GOP spokeswoman Tarah Donoghue insists that, "They are providing the resources Scott needs. We're working incredibly closely with them."

But Larry Sabato, director of the University of Virginia Center for Politics, said, "The Republicans have a good chance to pick up several or more Senate seats in November, which would eliminate the Democratic 60-seat edge. They're not going to go on any kamikaze missions."

Meanwhile, their Democratic counterparts have swung into action, appointing Sen. John F. Kerry as the chairman of a coordinating committee to funnel national donations to Coakley, the attorney general. The committee has recently attracted top fund-raiser Jon Patsavos, but a Coakley spokesman would not say how much the organizations have helped raise.

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