

Common sense may now prevail

By Holly Robichaud / The Lone Republican | Monday, January 3, 2011 | <http://www.bostonherald.com> | **Local Politics**

Brace for impact, Bacon Hill. Despite the massive failures of the Massachusetts Republican Party, out of the 39 freshmen members of the state House of Representatives, 21 new GOP legislators will be sworn into office Wednesday — if Worcester Republican Peter Durant holds his one-vote lead in a legal challenge — making them the largest GOP class in decades.

After combating the Massachusetts-only blue wave, these new reps won't be shrinking violets caving in to the whims of a dictatorial speaker. The GOP may have less than 20 percent of the House, but this bigger presence will provide some common sense that has been lacking since the days of representatives Steve Pierce, Ed Teague and Jack Flood.

During the past five years, there have been numerous close House votes despite the dearth of GOP members. One of the most controversial issues was the Perry amendment, requiring proof of citizenship to collect welfare benefits. Fresh off the campaign trail Rep.-elect Geoff Diehl plans to take up where Perry left off.

"It is the first promise I plan to keep," said Diehl.

Gov. **Deval Patrick** will be disappointed when he tries to offer in-state tuition breaks for **illegal immigrants** again. In 2006, that failed 96-57.

Beware hacks. In 2009, the move to abolish Suffolk County hack holidays had a tie vote (78-78). With 21 additional eager fiscal conservatives, Bunker Hill and Evacuation Days will be history.

Rep.-Elect Angelo D'Emilia, a small business owner, wants to stimulate the economy by rolling back the income and sales taxes to 5 percent. In 2009 the sales tax hike passed in the House by a 57-vote margin. That might seem too great a difference to overcome, but don't count out the fear factor. These Republicans defeated 12 incumbents. Veteran lawmakers are going to think twice before offering amendments to water down the Perry amendment.

Other issues that may see a different outcome in 2011 could be the death penalty, increasing the local option abatement for seniors, fees for inmates, pension reform and audits of the Legislature. But don't bet on gambling. Robert DeLeo has always had the votes in the House. The blame for failure rests with the Senate and the governor.

The new House stands to have 32 watchdogs and none of them eat bacon.

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