

Smizik comments on HB.4248, An Act Relative to Filling a Temporary Vacancy in the United States Senate.

I rise late in this debate because I feel I have to respond.

It is my obligation, as well as yours, to make sure the people of Massachusetts are well represented. Massachusetts will not be adequately represented if there are votes on health care, climate change, transportation and appropriations, if the Commonwealth has only one vote instead of two. One vote could change the outcome. For what earthly reason shouldn't we want adequate representation when the outcome could be beneficial to Massachusetts residents. Many bills are moving or scheduled to move in the next three months and it is critical that Massachusetts should have input and an equal number votes with other states. People who oppose this bill are in effect willing to cut off their nose to spite their faces and the nose and faces of all their constituents who demand good representation. Please support this legislation so that Massachusetts will be on equal footing with the other fifty states.

I believe in the principle that people should be able to vote for their senators with all my heart. We should respect and determine the will of the people. My belief in this principle is unalterable. Why then would I support this legislation? The answer is that we are only permitting the governor to appoint a person until we can hold a special election to get a permanent Senator. The appointed person will not run in the special election! This is a common sense interim approach and most states agree with this strategy.

Polls released show, that by a wide margin, the people of Massachusetts support this proposal. They have looked at the issue and come to a practical decision. That is what we are doing here today and why I support this legislation.

I honored Senator Kennedy when he was alive and I would like to honor his request. I hope you will also honor Senator Kennedy's request.