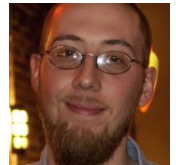


Senator Scott Brown Visits The Catwalk Bar & Grille in New Bedford



by Ian
Baker

Awaiting Senator Scott Brown's arrival on Friday evening was akin to waiting for the guest of honor to show up at their surprise party, except that in this case the guest already knew about the surprise. A crowd of about 50 people were there to take part in a fundraiser for his re-election at the Catwalk Bar and Grille. The group consisted primarily of supporters of Scott Brown, while a few others were present out of sheer curiosity, seeking to catch a glimpse of the newest Massachusetts senator. Each time the door would open, the volume at the popular downtown New Bedford bar would lower noticeably as the patrons' collective gaze shifted towards the newest arrival. When the senator finally did enter, the mood in the room quickly transformed from anticipatory to excited.

After ordering a drink, Senator Brown made no hesitation to meet every person in the room. With snapshots constantly being taken he made his way around the entire establishment, weaving about the crowd, shaking hands and chatting, his affability exceeded only by his efficiency at speaking to so many people in such a short time. Smiling supporters waited patiently for their turn to have their picture taken and to speak to the Senator, all the while snacking on hors d'oeuvres provided by the Catwalk.



Senator Scott Brown address his supporters at the Catwalk.

Senator Brown has made headlines in recent days regarding his soon-to-be-released memoir, *Against All Odds*, in which he comes forward about having been abused as child. He appeared reticent to speak about the issue during a brief speech at the end of his visit, stating only that although it was a significant event in his life. "It's only about 10 pages out of 400 in the book," he said, cautioning against sensationalism.

The senator went on to congratulate Tom Hodgson on his recent election victory for sheriff, and thanked him and the crowd for their support. He continued by addressing his re-election campaign in 2012, stating that he expects a competitive race.

He is seeking to raise \$25 million to prepare for the race, a figure he has described as "sick." Senator Brown has already raised \$8 million toward that goal. Almost \$5 million is left over after his upset defeat of Martha Coakley last January in a special election to fill the late Ted Kennedy's senate seat.

It was an especially personal event for the owners of the Catwalk, Barry Flynn and Dennis Keohane. When they purchased the Union Street establishment in 2002, it was a lawyer named Scott Brown that helped them to close the deal, and the three have remained friends. He has since returned to the venue a number of times, including a very successful fundraiser for his election in 2010.



NBG writer Ian Baker poses for a picture with Senator Brown.

For better or worse, Scott Brown has lived up to his campaign rhetoric of independence since taking office last year. He has voted with the Republican party on many issues, including health care and the Bush-era tax cuts. However, he has strayed from the mainstream right on many key issues such as financial regulations and his approval of the new START treaty. He has also drawn the ire of his party by supporting the repeal of the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy.

Locally, however, his supporters were unperturbed by this behavior, dispensing large applause to Brown's statement that, "If you're looking for an ideologue, I'm not your guy." On the topic fishing regulation, an issue that is critical not only to the state of Massachusetts but specifically to New Bedford, he remained decidedly cautious, acknowledging a proper role for regulation concerning the environment, but also stating that the government needs to know when to back off when jobs are at stake.

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