



# **The Bluest State: How Democrats Created the Massachusetts Blueprint for American Political Disaster**

*Jon Keller*

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### **What's Happened to Massachusetts?**

At one time, Americans thought of Massachusetts with pride. It was the place where the charge against British oppression was incubated and first battle of the Revolutionary War was fought. It was the intellectual center of the United States, the home of the country's first university – Harvard - and the birthplace of some of our most famous writers -- Emily Dickinson, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, to name just a few. What do Americans picture when they think of Massachusetts today? They think of taxes on everything that moves and a burning desire to tax what doesn't. They think of unctuous, doomed Presidential candidates from Michael Dukakis to John Kerry. And, most of all, they think of "Kennedy Country" - not the moderate politics of JFK who backed supply-side tax cuts and saber-rattling foreign policy, but a place influenced by the ideology of his little brother, Ted, a punch line for bad political jokes and the relic of a dream gone bad. Over the past thirty years, Massachusetts has been the test kitchen for the baby boom's political impulses and instincts, with devastating results: urban deterioration, failing public schools and a vanishing job base. Unfortunately, the story of Massachusetts' decline has national implications. Other states share its problems. And the cautionary tale of their mishandling in Massachusetts speaks to a broader issue. What's gone wrong with the Democratic Party? In *The Bluest State*, a book that echoes Tom Franks' bestseller "What's the Matter With Kansas?" Jon Keller, a veteran political commentator, shows how the collapse of the Massachusetts Miracle into the Massachusetts Miasma mirrors chronic failures within the Democratic Party and American liberalism. After an election in which Democrats elsewhere regained power in Washington by moving toward the political center, the story of how failed boomer politics ruined one of America's great liberal citadels is a timely warning to the party for the election ahead.

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