

Sargent Pressed by Rival, Watergate and Economy

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BOSTON, Oct. 25—This is not a good year, Gov. Francis W. Sargent is finding, to be a Republican and an incumbent.

Mr. Sargent, a liberal who has gone to some lengths to stake out his independence from the Nixon Administration and the state Republican party, is faced not only with the hard-driving campaign of his Democratic rival, Michael S. Dukakis, but also with voter disillusionment over Watergate, the Presidential pardon and the sagging economy.

Mr. Dukakis, once regarded as somewhat of a maverick in his own party, has spent years preparing the groundwork for his campaign for the governorship and currently enjoys a strong lead in all known polls.

The latest Boston Globe poll, published last Sunday, shows Mr. Dukakis leading the Governor by 25 points. An earlier Globe poll had Mr. Dukakis ahead by 18 points.

With both candidates representing the liberal wing of their parties and both having a general reputation for rectitude, the contest is more a choice of personal styles than issues or ideology.

Stresses Management

Mr. Dukakis, a short, neatly groomed, intensely earnest man, bristles with statistics, programs and pronouncements. His major emphasis is on "management," contending that state government has been sloppily run.

Mr. Sargent, a tall and patrician man of inherited wealth, has introduced often controversial reforms in welfare and the prisons. He is known for his warm, folksy campaign style and is rated a champion hand shaker, smiler and parade leader.

Massachusetts, the only state to vote for Senator George McGovern in 1972, has a long political tradition of being liberal and independent.

The independent voters are a key block here, numbering 1.1 million, with some 1.2 million registered Democrats and 500,000 Republicans. Although nominally Democratic, the state frequently elects liberal Republicans.

This year, the poor economic situations—the unemployment rate stands at 8.1 per cent—and the fallout of the Watergate scandals appear to have contributed to a turn-the-rascals-out mood that has changed the normal advantages of incumbency into a drawback.

'Lucky Enough to Lose'

Mr. Sargent touched on this in one of the candidates' televised debates when he attempted to portray Mr. Dukakis as a less than new face by saying his opponent "has been running for state office as long as I have." "He's just been lucky enough to lose and keep himself out of trouble," he said.

For eight years, the 40-year-old Mr. Dukakis was a State Representative from suburban Brookline, where he led the fight for the state's pioneering no-fault auto insurance bill. He ran unsuccessfully as the Democratic nominee for Lieutenant Governor in 1970.

While out of office, the serious, some say almost humorless, Mr. Dukakis worked for a law firm, but devoted most of his time to a public interest law and research organization, moderating a public television program "The Advocates" and to building his own statewide political organization.

Mr. Dukakis, who attended Swarthmore College and Harvard Law School, used to run in the Boston Marathon. He has been pursuing a grueling campaign schedule for months. But he makes a point of frequently eating at home with his children.

As Governor, Mr. Sargent, 59, has been frequently critical of the Republican national Administration. He refused to al-

low the state's police files to be placed in the Federal intelligence bank. And he has engaged in a series of squabbles with his own party organization.

Much of the campaign has been carried on in the shadow of Boston's court-ordered school busing controversy. Both candidates have agreed to attempt to stay away from the volatile issues and one of their series of televised debates was canceled when the situation appeared tense.

Governor Sargent called National Guard units to their armories earlier this month, without consulting Boston's Mayor, Kevin H. White. The schools have been largely quiet in recent days, and the Governor's aides hope that the call-up by making Mr. Sargent appear firm and decisive, will rebound to his credit.

Mr. Dukakis has not attacked the social reforms of the Sargent years, but has said that government must be trimmed and made more efficient. He has said, for instance, that one of the Governor's most controversial programs—prison furloughs—is a good concept that needs tighter administration.

Would Slash Staff

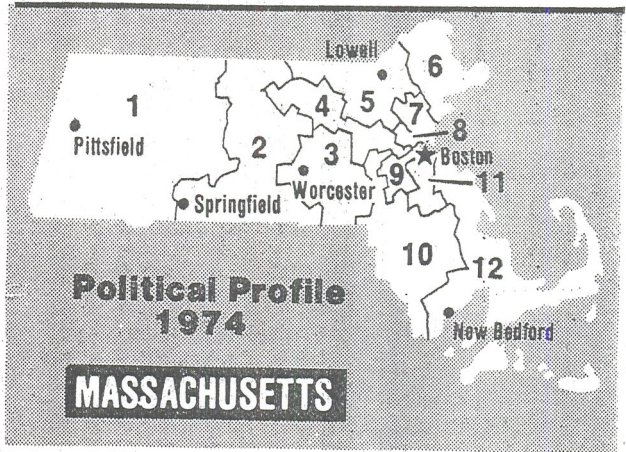
He has said, among other things, that he would slash the Governor's staff, eliminate patronage, and balance the budget without new taxes.

Governor Sargent has said he is doing the best he can in bad times and that he "will not cut back" on reforms.

The campaign has grown shrill as the election nears. In their televised debate in Springfield this week, Governor Sargent accused Mr. Dukakis of making "wild" and "empty" promises. Mr. Dukakis, in turn, charged Mr. Sargent's television ads were "the most acurrilous thing I've ever seen."

They had a long range over whether Mr. Sargent incorrectly counted the present year when he said he had not raised taxes for three years and whether Mr. Dukakis had said he would cut the state budget 5 per cent or improve productivity, 5 per cent.

There was a brief flareup



Population: 5,689,170

White	5,477,624	96.3%
Black	175,817	3.1%
Other	35,729	.6%

Jobless Rate: 8.1% (Aug.)

Statewide Race:

Governor	Michael S. Dukakis (D)
	Francis W. Sargent (R)*

Congressional Representation:

Senate	1 (D) 1 (R)
House	9 (D) 3 (R)

Vote in 1972

Presidential Election:

Nixon	45.2%
McGovern	54.2%
Other	.6%

*Incumbent

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At the debate the other night, there was an incident that Mr. Sargent's camp hopes will show their man's endearing humanity and Mr. Dukakis's camp hopes will portray the Governor as inefficient and bumbling.

Mr. Sargent said that he had a quotation for Mr. Dukakis that would devastate his rival's argument. Then he began shuffling through his papers to find it. Then he shuffled some more. Mr. Dukakis wore a prime smile as Mr. Sargent continued to look.

"Well," the Governor grumbled irritably, "I can't find the thing."