Dedham woman to cast Electoral College vote today

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DEDHAM — Carol Pacheco of Dedham is one of 12 presidential electors who will represent Massachusetts in the official Electoral College vote today. At 3 p.m., she will participate in a black-tie ceremony at the State House, casting her ballot for president at the same time Electoral College members do so nationwide. In January, Pacheco will attend the inauguration in Washington. Pacheco has been on the Democratic State Committee for about five years. She volunteered at the Democratic conventions in 2000 and 2004. She is a retired elementary schoolteacher, having taught in Boston for 25 years. Pacheco has lived in Dedham for over 30 years with her husband, Ron, and they raised their two daughters here.

DAILY NEWS TRANSCRIPT: How were you chosen as one of Massachusetts’ 12 presidential electors?

CAROL PACHECO: I’m a member of the Democratic State Committee - I’m a labor delegate to the committee. We had an election a few months back, and people ran to become electors. I was nominated, and I won. There are a few hundred people on the state committee, and I received about a hundred votes, which was very nice.

DNT: Have you been involved in state politics for a long time?
CP: Forever. I've always been very political. My family's very political. My mother and father were both union people. I worked for the Boston Teachers Union - I'm a retired Boston teacher. And I worked as a field rep. for the Boston Teachers Union, and was on the political committee that they have. So I've been very involved in mostly Boston politics, but state politics as well. I'm on the Dedham Democratic Town Committee - been on that for many years.

DNT: How do you feel about your opportunity to actually elect Barack Obama on Monday?

CP: It was very interesting to watch the results, and to know that when they said he had this many electoral votes, that I was one of them - that was really very exciting to me. I'm very excited about this. In fact, I'm going to be giving the speech to nominate Joseph Biden as the vice president. He's a very good friend to labor and to education, so that's going to be wonderful. It's amazing to be an elector in a year when we have a winning ticket. I have a friend who was an elector when Al Gore ran. She didn't elect him, she won Massachusetts, but that was the end of it, which was very sad.

DNT: It's definitely a big turning point in America.

CP: It is. You can feel the difference already. You can feel people being a little more hopeful than they have been, and just feeling that maybe even with everything that's going on right now, the economic turmoil, that things are going to get better.

DNT: Technically, you don't have to vote for Obama, right?

CP: That's true. Technically, I don't.

DNT: But you plan to vote for Obama?

CP: I do, yes.

DNT: Did you initially support Obama in the primary, or were you for Hillary?

CP: I was a Hillary (supporter). In fact, I traveled around the country working for Hillary. I went to McAllen, Texas, and I was of course up in New Hampshire. But once the primary was done and once Obama was the candidate, I then continued, and I've been up to New Hampshire several times before the election, doing phone calls and letters, and I was in Washington once. So I am definitely supporting Obama, because Hillary asked us to. I would have loved to have Hillary be the president, but that didn't work out, and she's going to be a magnificent secretary of state.

DNT: Do you think the Electoral College is still the right system for the country to use?

CP: Well, I have mixed feelings about that. It created a problem 8 years ago, and we ended up with 8 years of George W. Bush. So in that case, I was not thrilled with it. But it's difficult to just have the popular vote. I know there is a push to change to the popular vote. But with everything that happens with the ballots, and the different ways of voting, and the different ways people do the whole process, it's hard to keep track of it all. It's just unbelievably huge. So I think this may be a sort of check and balance.

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