



LEGISLATIVE NEWSLETTER LEGISLATIVE NEWSLETTER

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What's Up

State House Political Update: With Election Day on Nov. 8 fast approaching, there's lots of talk about the control of the state House. In the 120-member chamber, Republicans hold 74 seats, Democrats 45, with one lawmaker unaffiliated but aligned with Republicans. By controlling three-fifths of seats, Republicans have a so-called supermajority, which allows them to override any veto by the governor if nearly all GOP members support it.

Since 2012, when Republicans soundly defeated Democrats by increasing their majorities in the state Senate and House and also won the governor's mansion, they have implemented a conservative economic and social agenda that has attracted international publicity. The supermajority has given Republicans great leverage, which the Democrats could turn around by netting four seats.

Background: Polls show Roy Cooper, the attorney general and Democratic gubernatorial nominee, in a tight race with Republican Gov. Pat McCrory. If Cooper unseats McCrory and the Democrats take those four seats to end the supermajority, Cooper could have power to veto bills he and fellow Democrats dislike.

On the other side, Republican House Speaker Tim Moore of Kings Mountain has publicly discussed a different outcome. Moore said early polls done by his caucus made him think Republicans could increase their supermajority by gaining two seats. New House Majority Leader John Bell of Goldsboro agrees. "We have challenges but we also have excellent candidates, especially in several rural races," Bell said, according to news reports. "We're getting their names out there and telling the good story of what's going on with the economy."

Population Boom: North Carolina's population boom has attracted a torrent of moderate voters unaffiliated with either party. State Board of Elections data shows the number of unaffiliated voters has doubled since 2004. Joe Stewart of N.C. Free Enterprise Foundation, which tracks legislative races, said that an already substantial urban-rural cultural divide has deepened.

Since the 2010 census, 49 counties have lost population while Raleigh and Charlotte have grown dramatically. The 2016 legislative session showcased urban-rural fights for budget resources and also over social issues. "Rural communities lose youth to the cities and resent urban dynamism and more liberal attitudes," he said. "How we resolve this is a major issue for the future of North Carolina."

Meantime, Democrats say they could net up to 12 House seats. They also say having Hillary Clinton atop their ticket has energized their statewide coordination. Campaign resources are flowing from Clinton to Cooper and U.S. Senate candidate Deborah Ross and further down the ticket. Republican Party Executive Director Dallas Woodhouse sees it differently. "In House races," he said, "there is less money and less media attention. People forget that very often it is local issues that rule the day."

Look at Some Local Races: Local issues are in play in the Outer Banks' District 6, where a seat opened with the resignation of Rep. Paul Tine of Dare County, the House's only unaffiliated member. Republican Beverly Boswell, a Dare County commissioner, is battling a fellow commissioner, Democrat Warren Judge, who has raised more money. District 8, which covers Pitt and Wilson counties, features a close fight between two-term incumbent Republican Rep. Susan Martin and Democrat Charlie Pat Farris. A trial lawyer active in the community, Farris had about \$51,000 on hand at the end of June, while Martin had \$154,000.

Another lively urban race is underway in vacant District 92 in Charlotte. Democrat Chaz Beasley and Republican Danae Caulfield are squaring off for the seat formerly held by Huntersville Republican Charles Jeter, with ample money and ample issues, including the proposed Interstate 77 toll road. Beasley is a young, Harvard-educated, African-American candidate, the kind of profile the state Democratic Party wants to see giving more election night victory speeches. Democrats could well have more bargaining power next year. "One thing is for sure," Bell said, according to The Insider. "Both sides of the aisle will be relieved on Nov. 9. This has been a grueling election cycle."(Dan Boylan, THE INSIDER, 10/15/16).

Voting Registration

North Carolina judge last week ordered the state voter registration deadline extended in 36 counties hurt by Hurricane Matthew and resultant flooding. Wake Superior Court Judge Don Stephens gave the order to push the deadline from Friday to Wednesday.

The counties include Beaufort, Bertie, Bladen, Brunswick, Camden, Carteret, Chowan, Columbus, Craven, Cumberland, Currituck, Dare, Duplin, Edgecombe, Gates, Greene, Harnett, Hoke, Hyde, Johnston, Jones, Lenoir, Nash, New Hanover, Onslow, Pamlico, Pasquotank, Pender, Perquimans, Pitt, Robeson, Sampson, Tyrrell, Washington, Wayne and Wilson.

Quote of the Week

“The candidate who is cool, confident, commanding and in control always wins. See: John F. Kennedy, Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton...Post-debate analysis is flawed because it’s about what candidates said. Nobody cares what they said, unless there was a memorable line or screw-up.”

Gary Pearce, a columnist for [Talking About politics](#), in a post last week about political candidates and debates.

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