

# Legislative Solutions



## State Election Preview



### The Planets Are Aligning For The November Election

- Not only is it a Presidential election year, but control of the state legislatures is critical for the redistricting of congressional seats. It's the one time every ten years when state legislators exercise the most power over their state delegation in Washington.

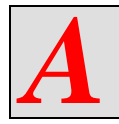
Only six states are not holding legislative elections this year, (NJ, VA, MS, MD, AL and LA). Michigan, one of many key swing states, has its House up for re-election this year, but not the Senate. It's expected that November should be friendly to incumbents, however the balance of power in several states is so precarious that it's too close to call.

**T**he Midwest has been receiving much attention as the "battleground" for George W. Bush and Al Gore, and state elections are proving to be just as contentious as the election draws near.

**Missouri** is faced with a difficult situation. Tragically, the state's popular Gov. Mel Carnahan (D) died in a plane accident while running for U.S. Senate. This unfortunate situation overshadows the race to replace him as Governor between Congressman Jim Talent (R) and Missouri State Treasurer Bob Holden (D). Both candidates hope to win the office and provide coattails to help their party take control of the House and Senate. Currently, the Democrats hold a two-vote majority in the Senate and a ten-vote majority in the House, but a party switch in a few key races could make all the difference.



Gov. George Ryan (R) of **Illinois** would desperately like to see Republicans gain full party control in Springfield, but they must win at least four seats to gain a majority in the House, a difficult task considering Chicago's Democratic leanings. On the Senate side, the Republicans hold a five-seat majority and are likely to maintain their control.



### Few Seats Can Make The Difference – Washington

state elections could prove to be one of the most exciting. The state is electing all 98 of its Representatives, 25 of its 49 Senators and the Governor. A tie (49-49) in the House of Representatives illustrates the



importance of voter turnout as both parties are looking to gain control. In the Senate, a net loss of just three seats would put Republicans in control. Despite a challenge from radio talk show host John Carlson (R), Gov. Gary Locke (D) is popular among constituents and expected to be re-elected.

**Arizona's** Gov. Jane Dee Hull (R) hopes to maintain full party control by holding onto a slim two-seat majority in the Senate. This takes on national significance since Arizona is predicted to gain two congressional seats during redistricting.



**Florida** will see sweeping change among its state lawmakers as many officeholders succumb to term limits in November. Governor Jeb Bush (R) and the Republican-controlled legislature have been able to accomplish much of their agenda, but many wonder whether they can hold onto the state legislature this year. With only a six-seat Republican majority in the Senate, and both George W. Bush and Al Gore pouring resources into the state, presidential politics may determine the ultimate outcome of the state Senate.



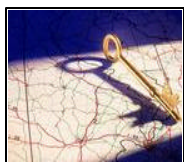
**North Carolina** has much riding on the upcoming elections as well. Voters will be choosing a new governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, agriculture commissioner, state treasurer, and labor



commissioner. The race for governor is still close, but it appears former Attorney General Mike Easley (D) has begun to pull ahead of former Charlotte Mayor Richard Vinroot (R). Democrats should retain power in both chambers, where they hold double-digit margins.

➔ (Cont.)

**Midwest (Cont.)** – Kentucky’s Gov. Paul Patton (D) could enjoy Democrat control in his state, but the Republicans hold a two vote majority in the Senate and are fighting to maintain that slim edge while possibly gaining a few seats in the House, where Democrats hold a 65 to 35 seat advantage. **Michigan’s** popular Governor John Engler (R) has enjoyed full party control since 1998, but he is campaigning vigorously to maintain a precarious six-seat lead in the House.



**Redistricting Key to Election** -

Redistricting will take place next year once the results of the 2000 census are tallied. This year's elections, deciding some 6,000 state legislative seats, become crucial because the majority party controls congressional redistricting in most states.

A quick look at current numbers shows Republicans controlling both houses in 18 legislatures, Democrats controlling 19, with 12 legislatures split between parties (the non-partisan Nebraska legislature brings the total to fifty). Many states are divided by such small margins, that a shift in chamber power is very realistic. Five states in particular (IL, MI, PA, TX, and WI), are generating significant national attention because they will gain or lose seats and their state legislatures hold slim majorities.<sup>1</sup>

Seats Gained/Lost After Redistricting	
Winners	Losers
AZ (+2)	CT (-1)
CA (+1)	IL (-1)
CO (+1)	MS (-1)
FL (+1)	NY (-2)
GA (+2)	OH (-1)
MT (+1)	OK (-1)
NV (+1)	PA (-2)
TX (+2)	WI (-1)

*Estimated by Election Data Services, Washington, D.C.*

In contrast to the typical redistricting challenge, some states have recently taken politicians out of the equation by appointing nonpartisan commissions to do the work (HI, MO, MT, PA, and WA). This year, Arizona asks voters to decide on Proposition 106, which would rewrite the state constitution to impanel a commission every ten years to redraw the lines for their state's congressional districts.

**Balance Of Power Shift (Cont.)** - Texas may not be very exciting to many on the federal level since George W. Bush should easily win his home state, but on the state level it is worth watching.



Republicans hope Bush's coattails will help them hold a precarious one-seat majority over Democrats in the state Senate.

**South Carolina** is another state where the balance of power could be shifting in either chamber of the state legislature. Republicans hold a four-seat margin in the House and Democrats own a two-seat majority in the Senate.



**Vermont** Governor Howard Dean (D) is being challenged by Republican Ruth Dwyer, as well as



Progressive Party candidate Anthony Pollina, in an election that could be decided by the state legislature, literally.

If each fails to win 50% of the vote, the legislature, controlled by the Democrats, will choose the new Governor.

**New Hampshire** hopes to break a tie in the Senate, which is currently deadlocked at 12 seats for each party. However the House is firmly in control of the Republicans. The battle for Governor will dominate the news as Gov. Jeanne Shaheen (D) faces former U.S. Senator Gordon Humphrey (R) in a hotly contested race.



**Pennsylvania** is another state with a deadlocked chamber at stake in November. With state Rep. Thomas Druce (R) resigning in the wake of legal problems, (the seventh state lawmaker to have been convicted of crimes since last year,) the House is split evenly (100-100). Gov. Tom Ridge (R) is hoping his party can regain full party control, since PA is predicted to lose two congressional seats during redistricting.



**Legislative Solutions** tracks legislative and regulatory developments within all fifty states for businesses and associations, applying years of state legislative experience to serve your unique needs. For more information please contact us at:

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<sup>1</sup> "Election 2000 - the States are Crucial", *State Legislatures*, September 2000.