

they have numerically, the Senate could be in a 19-19 tie. This gives tremendous power to the Lieutenant Governor, who gets to cast the tie-breaking vote. Though most insiders still believe the Senate will remain in Republican hands, this is a scenario that is not outside of possibility.

The election is Tuesday, November 2. Voter registration for the General Election cuts of 1-month prior.

Supreme Court

Supreme Court Justice Betty Weaver made news a week ago with her shocking withdrawal from the Court. Each political party was slated to nominate one Justice to run this November. The Democrats chose Denise Langford-Morris, an Oakland County circuit judge, to run against the Republican's choice of incumbent Justice Bob Young. Weaver chose to run independently, as the Republicans also chose incumbent Justice Mary Beth Kelley.

However, Weaver suddenly decided to retire and withdraw from the race last Friday, August 27. Governor Granholm immediately appointed Appellate Judge Alton Thomas Davis to fill the vacancy left by Weaver. Weaver, a Republican, vocally supported Davis, a strong Democrat, as her "top choice" to replace her. A Governor's Supreme Court appointments are not subject to approval by the Senate.

This allows Davis to run in November as an incumbent judge, and also tips the scales in favor of Democrats on the Supreme Court, 4-3.

Legislature Returns from Short Summer Break

The Michigan House and Senate return to session this week and their top agenda item will be the completion of the 2010-2011 budget. Even though the majority of State Representatives and Senators spent August on the campaign trail, key members of the Appropriations Committees were often in Lansing crunching numbers. The latest reports from Legislative leaders working on the budget are optimistic that a deal will be reached well before the October 1 deadline.

Just what that deal will entail is still up in the air. The Legislature completed work on the K-12 budget before the summer recess, but still has the rest of state governmental functions to fund for next year. Governor Granholm has not proposed any major new revenues like in past years which has somewhat smoothed the process (although it will lead to more drastic cuts in state services). The Governor's proposal to generate savings by consolidating the state's liquor distribution to a single vendor is not gaining much traction either.

It seems likely that the Legislature will present the Governor with a completed budget before by September 30, thereby avoiding a government shutdown. However, it is also likely that the budget will contain major cuts to state services, including public health, environmental regulation and aid to local governments.