The elections are coming: What will happen?

By Janet Kopenhaven

Part I — The Senate

This column begins a three-part series on the upcoming Nov. 4 elections and what we can expect after the results are in. This week we will look at what’s ahead for the Senate, next the House of Representatives and finally a look at the presidential race.

The Senate

First let us review the Senate breakdown and math. Currently there are 51 Democrats, 49 Republicans and 2 independents who usually side with the Democrats. However, because fill-in seats are common for any major piece of legislation considered in the Senate, a mere majority is not enough to move legislation through the process. In order to truly control legislation in this congressional chamber, a party needs to have enough members to invoke cloture (which ends a filibuster and requires a vote to be taken) — or 60 Senators.

What’s at stake?

In November, 35 Senate seats will be voted on. Of these seats, 12 are returning Democrats and 25 are Republicans. With regard to the Republican seats, five are considered open (Colorado, Idaho, Nebraska, New Mexico and Virginia) because the incumbents are retiring. Historically, open seats are much harder to defend than those in which an incumbent is running again. The Democrats have no open seats. Just looking at the math, one can see the Republicans are going to have a steeper hill to climb than their counterparts.

The battleground

Most pundits agree that the Virginia seat currently held by Sen. John Warner will likely turn Democrat with a win by former governor Mark Warner (no relation). Also, the Colorado seat held by Sen. Wayne Allard is very likely to switch and be handed to current Congressman Mark Udall. The Republican Party in Idaho has been hurt by Sen. Larry Craig’s “scandal” and that is like having millions of micro-sized light prisms in the composite restoration – is catching everyone’s attention.

Taking all this into consideration, my crystal ball tells me that the Democrats will pick up four to six Senate seats. While still not hitting that magic number of 60, at 57 they would be extremely close.

Contact info

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