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■(GIT) State Republican leaders were brimming with optimism in July when the number of Republican candidates outpaced the number of Democratic candidates filing for office.

As the general election neared, however, some of that optimism faded. Gone now is the claim that the GOP might wrest control of the state House of Representatives from the Democrats (a claim some Republicans

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were reluctant to make even in July). In its place is the assertion that the state's minority party will retain control of the veto in the House of Representatives and the prediction that the party will gain some seats in both the House and the Senate.

Democrats currently hold a 35 to 32 seat advantage over Republicans in the state legislature, including an 18 to 6 advantage in seats not up for election in the Senate and a 3 to 1 advantage in Senate races already decided. In the House, where this year's big

campaign trail battles are being waged, Republicans hold a one seat advantage, 15 to 14, among the seats already decided.

Quinita Wylie, executive director of the Oklahoma Republican Party, and Pat Hall, executive director of the Oklahoma Democratic Party, each expressed confidence about their respective party's chances in Tuesday election, as one might expect. Here's how they see it.

STATE SENATE

"We'll keep the seats we have without any problem," said Wylie of races for the state Senate. "Beyond that, I think we have a shot at picking up maybe as many as four seats.

"I would say we have a real good shot at two of those, and there are two others in which our campaigns are going really well."

Pressed for information about which seats she was speaking, Wylie joked, "We don't want to give away our game plan."

Hall expressed much the same reluctance about talking in specifics, although he said some GOP claims that certain Democrats were in danger of losing their seats are exaggerated. Without prompting, Hall said Republicans had talked about picking up as many as five or six seats, including two which were vacated, District 33 held by Penny Williams, of Tulsa, and districts 15, 37 and 49, held by Trish Weedn, of Duncan; Lewis Long, of Glenpool; and Don Williams, of Balco, respectively.

"We're going to keep our super majority in the Senate," said Hall, "and in my opinion, we will either pick up one or lose one."

Democrats outnumbered Republicans 32 to 13 at the end of the 45th Legislature.

STATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wylie said she and her fellow Republicans are feeling good about their races for the state House of Representatives, where Democrats outnumbered Republicans 64 to 36 with one vacancy.

"We're feeling good, very good," Wylie said. "We've got a real good shot at 20 seats, I believe, and I sincerely think we will pick up eight to 10 seats at the minimum."

Wylie attributed that potential success to the efforts put forth by the candidates, both on the campaign trail and in fundraising efforts.

"These folks are out there doing everything right," said Wylie. "They're working hard and they're working smart."

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fought so bitterly over SQ669 have joined forces in support of the three new questions. Calling themselves Oklahomans for Property Tax Relief, the major players from both sides of the SQ669 debate have endorsed the passage of the questions on Tuesday's ballot.

Marion Garber, co-chair of the group and an opponent of SQ669, said in Sept. that the new state questions are "clearly in the best interest of the taxpayers of Oklahoma." Passage of the questions, said Garber and other members of the group, will provide financial stability, particularly for small businesses; increase economic development opportunities; and increase local control of property tax issues.

Members of the new coalition include the Oklahoma Association of Realtors; Oklahoma Farm Bureau; Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association; Oklahoma State Chamber of Commerce; Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce; Tulsa Chamber of Commerce; National Federation of Independent Businesses; Oklahoma Business Council and the Oklahoma United Business Coalition.

While the battle over SQ669 was a bitter fight, no organized opposition has developed to the questions on the general election ballot. Additionally, newspaper endorsements have been numerous for the questions' passage, with only a few exceptions.

Following is a brief analysis of each question.

SQ 675

If approved by the voters, SQ675 would cap locally assessed real property tax ratios at 13.5 percent with a floor of 11 percent and place a 10 percent to 15 percent cap on all tangible personal property ratios, including locally assessed businesses. The measure also provides for the stabilization of the assessment ratio on all state assessed property

at the level in effect on Jan. 1, 1996 — 22.85 percent, 22.85 percent for public service property and 11.07 percent for airline and railroad property.

The ratio of locally assessed real and tangible personal property would not be increased except with approval of the voters of a county at an election called by the county commissioners or by a petition of the voters. Increases in the assessment ratios also cannot be increased within the limits by more than one percentage point per year.

SQ 676

State Question 676 limits an increase in the fair cash value of any locally assessed real property to five percent in any taxable year. The cap would not apply in any year when title to the property is transferred, changed or conveyed to another person or when improvements have been made on the property.

Additionally, the question provides that counties not in compliance with laws or regulations governing the valuation of locally assessed real property will not be subject to the cap until the county is deemed to be in compliance. The cap will not apply to personal property or public service corporation property.

SQ 677

State Question 677 freezes the tax value of homes owned by those over the age of 65 with gross incomes of \$25,000 or less. Under the terms of the proposal, any improvements made to such property shall be assessed and added to the assessed value of the property.

The freeze will remain in place until the owner dies, the owner's income exceeds the qualifying amount or the ownership of the property is changed.

All of the proposed state questions have a Jan. 1, 1997, effective date if approved.