



June 28, 2006

ANALYSIS: GOVERNORS WHO ONCE SERVED AS LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR (1980 – 2006)

PROJECT

The National Lieutenant Governors Association (NLGA) this month conducted a 50-state research project to review the biographical background of the governors of each state for the past 25 years (from January 1, 1980 – June 26, 2006). The purpose of the research was to determine whether or not each governor had ever served as lieutenant governor, or in the office first in line of gubernatorial succession in states without an office of lieutenant governor. An analysis of data was done to determine how often a governor had this background, and to further determine if regional variation in the data existed.

BACKGROUND

Research included internet inquiries and discussions with state librarians and officials in secretary of state offices. Staff representatives of several current lieutenant governors were contacted to provide lists by name of those who previously served as lieutenant governor. This information was compiled and cross referenced with established lists of past governors with their vitae.

Eight states do not have an office of lieutenant governor. In Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Tennessee and West Virginia, the governor is succeeded by the president of the state senate. In Tennessee and West Virginia, the presidents are empowered by statute to use the title of 'lieutenant governor' in recognition of the vital succession role. New Jersey created the office of lieutenant governor through a voter approved Constitutional amendment in November of 2005. The first New Jersey lieutenant governor will be elected in 2009. In Arizona, Oregon and Wyoming, the Secretary of State is first in line of succession.

For the purposes of this study, the official first in line of gubernatorial succession was used and was considered to be 'lieutenant governor.' The tables noting data from "LG" or 'lieutenant governor' include the official first in line of succession from the eight states without a lieutenant governor.

FINDINGS

In reviewing historical data from the past 25 to 30 years, more than twenty-five percent (25%) of all individuals who served as governor had at one time served their state as lieutenant governor. Table 1 displays the raw results.

Table 1

Raw Data	
197	# of governors who were not LG before holding governors seat
65	# of governors who were LG before holding governors seat
262	Total
Percentages	
75%	% of governors who were not LG before holding governors seat
25%	% of governors who were LG before holding governors seat
100%	

The results show that one in four of all state governors in the United States between the years 1980 – 2006 at one time served as lieutenant governor. This research establishes a strong relationship between serving as governor and having served as lieutenant governor. This research does not, however, establish a statistical correlation between having served as lieutenant governor and becoming Governor. Factors such as age, gender, other past political office, fundraising, and the ‘strength’ of the office of lieutenant governor in the state are among those which may also impact becoming governor.

These findings are consistent with a study completed in 1996 which looked at how many governors between the years 1900- 1980 had previously served as lieutenant governor. In “Lieutenant Governors: The Office and its Powers,” researcher Randall Fine, a Harvard University student, determined that a “significant 23% of governors (in that period) served at one point as lieutenant governor (p.44).” These two research projects demonstrate that for more than 100 years, it has remained consistent that nearly one in every four governors once served as lieutenant governor. Further, the percentage of governors with this background has increased somewhat over the past quarter- century (from 1980 – 2006).

REGIONAL ANALYSIS

The National Lieutenant Governors Association (NLGA) recognizes regional groups as reflected in its Board of Directors structure. Table 2 lists the states by region.

Table 2 – States by Region

East Region	Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont
Midwest Region	Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin
South Region	Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia
West Region	Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming

The findings for the years 1980 – 2006 were further analyzed by region to determine if this relationship was more prevalent in one part of the country than another. Table 3 shows variation between regions but no notable trend in any one region. The East region showed the largest percentage of governors who once served as lieutenant governor (28%), while the West had the

lowest percentage (22%).

Table 3

Region		Percentage
South	20 # of governors who were LG before holding governors seat	25%
	59 # of governors who were not LG before holding governors seat	75%
	<u>79</u>	
East	17 # of governors who were LG before holding governors seat	28%
	43 # of governors who were not LG before holding governors seat	72%
	<u>60</u>	
West	14 # of governors who were LG before holding governors seat	22%
	50 # of governors who were not LG before holding governors seat	78%
	<u>64</u>	
Midwest	14 # of governors who were LG before holding governors seat	24%
	45 # of governors who were not LG before holding governors seat	76%
	<u>59</u>	

The East region percentage may be artificially high due to the fact that New Jersey had several people become governor through succession in 2001 when Governor Christine Todd Whitman resigned and was confirmed Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. In the subsequent months, three different senate presidents became governor at various times and an attorney general was governor for ninety (90) minutes. Eliminating this anomaly by counting the four successions as just one succession drops the percentage for the East region to 26%. Eliminating this anomaly the same way from the national figures changes the national percentage by less than 1%. With the adjusted anomaly, the study would show that 24% of all state governors in the United States between the years 1980 – 2006 at one time served as lieutenant governor

FURTHER STUDY

NLGA will release a second report in March of 2007. This research will further examine the vitae of every governor who served between 1980 – 2006. The work seeks to determine if any other elected office or particular background is more prevalent than having held the office of lieutenant governor in governors’ backgrounds.

For more information, contact NLGA Executive Director Julia Hurst at (859) 283-1400, or by email at jhurst@nlga.us. Also see www.nlga.us

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Morgan Mundell was contracted by NLGA to conduct this research. Mundell served four years as the Assistant Director of the University of Missouri’s Community Policy Analysis Center. His background also includes three years legislative staff experience and his Master’s of Public Administration is from the University of Missouri.