

# The Opportunity in the Office of Lieutenant Governor

By Julia Hurst

*As state and territorial governments adapt to an ever-changing 21st century, executive and legislative branch officials are actualizing greater opportunity in the office of lieutenant governor. Leaders are tackling workforce, transportation and health care, and are working to provide new opportunities to small business on a global stage. Fully utilized, the office of lieutenant governor offers a high-ranking leader and ambassador providing a competitive edge unique to a state's priorities. Four case studies demonstrate states focusing lieutenant governors on economic development among their other duties.*

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Every lieutenant governor stands ready daily to become governor at a moment's notice, often under adverse circumstances. The duty to succeed to the office of governor, should that office be vacated, is the duty of the second-in-command of every state and territory. In fact, these officials become governor at a greater rate than any other local, state or federal official. Beyond that, the office of lieutenant governor is possibly the most diverse in state and territorial government. It is an office where some states are creating new opportunities to secure a competitive advantage.

A lieutenant governor may derive powers and duties from the state or territorial constitution, from statute, from the governor or through personal initiative. More than half the nation's seconds-in-command preside over the state senates, giving them powers in both the executive and legislative branches. Others lead divisions and departments of state government and many serve on or lead commissions covering a range of essential state issues. Beyond this, the office of lieutenant governor is being molded by governors, legislators and lieutenant governors themselves to meet the most pressing issue of the day—economic development and all its aspects.

In the four case studies presented here, governors tapped the lieutenant governor to shepherd aspects of economic development and job growth, ensuring the vital issue received attention and support from a top state-elected official. The designation of the lieutenant governor as a leader on an issue can be by directive or through executive order. In other states, lieutenant governors have been tapped by legislators through statute to serve in various capacities considered essential to the state. Through personal initiative, lieutenant governors have partnered with universities, the private sector

and nonprofits to advance initiatives contributing to recovering and growing economies.

Oklahoma Lt. Gov. Todd Lamb is the state small business advocate, a cabinet level position, among his other duties presiding over the state Senate and serving on nine councils. Other states utilize the lieutenant governor in small business roles from 'buy local' work to listening sessions. In Virginia, Lt. Gov. Bill Bolling is the chief jobs creation officer. In that capacity, he leads and brings synergy to the work of various agencies and groups. He also serves as a personal ambassador for specific opportunities to bring job growth to the state.

In Massachusetts, like other states, transportation is recognized as an engine of the economy. To that end, Lt. Gov. Tim Murray has been tapped as a leader to drive progress in every type of infrastructure—from airports and rail to seaports and military assets. Still other lieutenant governors lead efforts on other engines of the economy, like energy and tourism. Pennsylvania Lt. Gov. Jim Cawley leads the commission that developed the successful plan to move forward on Marcellus shale in the state. In Louisiana, Lt. Gov. Jay Dardenne leads the division of culture, recreation and tourism, a driving force in the state known for Super Bowls and Mardi Gras.

Likewise, the federal reform of health care brought this business cost driver to the forefront of economic development in the states. Several states and territories tapped their lieutenant governors to implement the provisions of health reform as it impacts everything from state and territorial budgets to business costs. Rhode Island Lt. Gov. Elizabeth Roberts and Maryland Lt. Gov. Anthony Brown lead implementation commissions in their respective states, while Ohio Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor and U.S. Virgin Islands Lt. Gov. Gregory Francis are directors of the departments of insurance.

The following is not an exhaustive list of the work of lieutenant governors in economic development, but is just a sample of 21st century utilization of the top tier office to bring competitive advantage to states and territories.

### ► **Case Study: Massachusetts**

#### **Lieutenant Governor Tim Murray Advancing Infrastructure**

Massachusetts Lt. Gov. Timothy Murray works closely with the governor to implement the administration's top priorities, including infrastructure investment to spur job creation and economic development across the state. Murray's infrastructure portfolio includes chairing the Seaport Advisory Council and the Military Asset and Security Task Force, and championing transportation and public infrastructure initiatives. With approximately 2,800 miles of coastline in Massachusetts, Murray chairs the Seaport Advisory Council, supporting more than \$50 million to revitalize port infrastructure such as dredging, access and security.

Most recently, Murray created the state's first Port Compact, bringing together key agencies to partner with Massachusetts' five deep-water port communities to increase coordination in strengthening commercial fishing and economic development. Massachusetts has more than 46,500 direct and indirect jobs across six military bases. As chair of the Military Asset and Security Strategy Task Force, Murray engages with government, industry and communities to protect, promote and even expand missions for Massachusetts' military bases to ensure job creation as well as national security.

Murray, who often describes transportation as "the enabling network of our economy," spearheads investments in regional transportation services to unlock economic development. Through a nation-leading initiative, Murray finalized a historic \$100 million agreement in 2012 between Massachusetts and CSX Transportation, including the relocation of a CSX intermodal facility from Boston to Worcester, increasing freight and commuter rail service and supporting job creation and business growth. In January 2013, Murray and the administration also released a comprehensive 10-year transportation plan, proposing critical regional infrastructure investments throughout the state.

To increase private investment in cities and towns, Murray has worked with the state Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development and the state legislature to create a one-stop shop of public infrastructure resources for municipalities. In the past two rounds of the MassWorks Infrastructure Program, the administration has awarded \$102 million to 86 projects supporting new housing, roadway improvements and business expansion.

For more information on Lt. Gov. Murray's policy work, visit:

***[www.mass.gov/governor/ltgovernor](http://www.mass.gov/governor/ltgovernor)***

Contributions from the Massachusetts Office of Lt. Gov. Tim Murray

## ► Case Study: Oklahoma

### Lieutenant Governor Todd Lamb Advocating Small Business

At a meeting of the governor's cabinet in Oklahoma, you will find small business represented at the table—in the form of the state's second highest-ranking official. The governor named Lt. Gov. Todd Lamb the state small business advocate, a cabinet-level position in the governor's administration. In this role, which he holds throughout the remainder of his term, Lamb has met with hundreds of small business owners, setting foot in all of Oklahoma's 77 counties and advocating numerous legislative and regulatory changes in his annual "Lieutenant Governor's Policy and Issues Report."

To directly engage small business, Lamb has initiated town hall meetings and small business and small manufacturer summits throughout the state during his term. He champions improvements in economic policy to support small business, such as removing impediments to growth and advocating for workers' compensation reform. In addition to sitting on the governor's cabinet, Lamb presides over the state Senate and, in total, he sits on or chairs nine other councils. His commission appointments include work on tourism, the arts, land use, capitol improvement, finances and more.

For more information on the Oklahoma Office of Lieutenant Governor, see:

***[www.ok.gov/ltgovernor/](http://www.ok.gov/ltgovernor/)***

Contributions from the Oklahoma Office of Lt. Gov. Todd Lamb

## ► Case Study: Rhode Island

### Lieutenant Governor Elizabeth Roberts Implementing Health Reform

The Rhode Island governor cited Lt. Gov. Elizabeth Roberts' "decades of valuable experience with health care-related issues" when signing an executive order putting her in charge of implementing federal health care reform in the state. As chair of the Rhode Island Healthcare Reform Commission, Roberts leads more than 150 stakeholders in all health care reform efforts; maximizing stakeholder and public engagement; assuring open dialogue with the General Assembly; identifying and removing barriers to and developing incentives for critical healthcare; and identifying workforce capacity and training needs in the private and public sector. Under her direction, the state is leading the country in establishing a health care benefits exchange, as well as charting the strategic direction for changes to how health care is paid for and delivered.

Roberts is chair of the 37-member Long-Term Care Coordinating Council, bringing together leaders from the private and public sectors to coordinate the state's long-term care agenda ensuring quality, affordability and access to the elderly and disabled. The lieutenant governor also chairs the 40-member Emergency Management Advisory Council, with the adjutant general of the Rhode Island National Guard serving as vice chair. The EMAC is responsible for advising emergency preparedness throughout the state. The domestic preparedness subcommittee was formed under EMAC in 2001 to coordinate state homeland security efforts.

Roberts also chairs the 20-member Small Business Advocacy Council giving small business a voice in government. She works directly with small business owners, chambers of commerce, government and private organizations to remove financial, regulatory and informational roadblocks that can hamper the creation and growth of small business.

Learn more about the Rhode Island Office of Lieutenant Governor at:  
[www.ltgov.ri.gov](http://www.ltgov.ri.gov)

Contributions from the Rhode Island Office of Lt. Gov. Elizabeth Roberts

## ► Case Study: Virginia

### Lieutenant Governor Bill Bolling Creating Jobs

In January 2010, the Virginia governor signed an executive order tapping Lt. Gov. Bill Bolling to serve as chief jobs creation officer and as a member of the governor's cabinet. As chief jobs creation officer, Bolling is responsible for shepherding the governor's economic development initiatives through the General Assembly and assisting economic development officials in recruiting new business and industry to Virginia.

Since the beginning of the administration in 2010, more than \$130 million in investments have been made in job creation programs, including tax cuts and incentives for job creating businesses. As a result, more than 140,900 net new jobs have been created and Virginia's unemployment rate has dropped from 7.3 percent to 5.5 percent. When Martinsville Speedway in southern Virginia faced losing one of its two NASCAR Sprint Cup series races, local leaders turned to Bolling for help, avoiding a significant adverse impact on the local economy. Bolling played a key role in putting together a package that saved the races, including state grants and other initiatives to enhance the onsite fan experience, improve facility infrastructure and implement a state tourism marketing plan that included the speedway. Six months later, after meetings with International Speedway Corporation officials, Bolling was in Martinsville announcing both races were guaranteed to remain at the track for at least five years.

In addition to his focus on economic development and job creation, Bolling is responsible for presiding over the Virginia Senate. In 2012, Bolling cast the tie-breaking vote to organize the Virginia Senate with a Republican majority. He also cast deciding votes to pass legislation that provided educational choice to low-income children through tuition tax credits, protected Virginia's right-to-work law by eliminating union preferences in state contracts, increased the integrity of elections and strengthened personal property rights.

You can learn more about the Virginia Office of Lieutenant Governor at:

***[www.ltgov.virginia.gov](http://www.ltgov.virginia.gov)***

Contributions from the office of  
Lt. Gov. of Virginia Bill Bolling

#### About the Author

**Julia Hurst** has 20 years of state government experience, having served as executive director of the National Lieutenant Governors Association since 2002. She previously served as chief operating officer of The Council of State Governments and as chief of staff to a legislative caucus. She also spent time as a multi-state lobbyist. For more information, visit [www.nlga.us](http://www.nlga.us).