



Georgia Office of Lt. Governor Data Sheet

As of September 7, 2016

History of Office

The Office of the Lt. Governor of Georgia was created with a revision to the State Constitution in 1945.¹

Origins of the Office

The Georgia Office of Lt. Governor was established with a revision to the State Constitution of 1877 in 1945. Before 1945, state senators chose the president of the senate, who then became the governor if a vacancy occurred in that office. The State Constitution of 1945 was actually an amendment to the Constitution of 1877, but it replaced that Constitution.² Before 1945, the first in line of succession was the President of the Senate. The Lt. Governor now presides over the Senate.³

Qualifications for Office

The Council of State Governments (CSG) publishes the Book of the States (BOS) 2015. In chapter 4, Table 4.13 lists the Qualifications and Terms of Office for lieutenant governors: [The Book of the States 2015 \(CSG\) at www.csg.org](#).

Method of Election

The National Lieutenant Governors Association (NLGA) maintains a list of the methods of electing gubernatorial successors at: <http://www.nlga.us/lt-governors/office-of-lieutenant-governor/methods-of-election/>.

Duties and Powers

A lieutenant governor may derive responsibilities one of four ways: from the Constitution, from the Legislature through statute, from the governor (thru gubernatorial appointment or executive order), thru personal initiative in office, and/or a combination of these. The principal and shared constitutional responsibility of every gubernatorial successor is to be the first official in the line of succession to the governor's office.

Succession to Office of Governor

In 1946, Former Governor Eugene Talmadge was elected to a third term but died before taking office. Outgoing Governor Ellis Arnall claimed the office, as did Lt. Governor Melvin Thompson. The state legislature chose Eugene Talmadge's son, Herman Talmadge, to be governor. This came to be called the "Three Governors Controversy." The State Supreme Court decided the legislative action was unconstitutional and declared Thompson the rightful governor. Talmadge

¹ Georgia Office of Lt. Governor web site - <https://ltgov.georgia.gov/history-office-lieutenant-governor>

² GeorgiaInfo Online Almanac - <http://georgiainfo.galileo.usg.edu/>

³ New Georgia Encyclopedia - <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/>

stepped down after 67 days.⁴ Lt. Governor Marvin Griffin was the first elected to that office in 1948.⁵ He was later elected Governor.

⁴ *ibid*

⁵ *ibid*