



Kentucky Office of Lt. Governor Data Sheet

As of August 30, 2016

History of Office

The Office of the Lt. Governor of Kentucky was created with the state's second Constitution which was ratified in 1799.¹

Origins of the Office

The Office of the Lt. Governor of Kentucky was established with the Constitution of 1799. The 1992 amendments to the Constitution of 1891 changed the office of Lt. Governor. Previous to that, the Lt. Governor became acting Governor whenever the Governor was out of state. With the amendments, the Lt. Governor only takes over gubernatorial powers when the Governor is incapacitated. The amendments also removed the Lt. Governor's duties in the Senate where the office had previously cast the tie breaking vote in the Senate.²

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 1816, Governor George Madison died three weeks into his term. His Lt. Governor, Gabriel Slaughter, succeeded to the office of Governor and immediately made unpopular appointments. The appointments upset many and a movement began in the House of Representatives to hold a new election for Governor. Leaders of the effort claimed that Slaughter was only the "acting governor" until a new governor was elected. The call for a new election failed in the House in 1815, but was approved by the House in 1817 only to fail in the Senate. Slaughter served out

¹ Kentucky Constitution of 1799

² 1992 Amendments to the Kentucky Constitution of 1891 – on line <http://www.lrc.ky.gov/lrcpubs/ib59.pdf>

the rest of Madison's term and, in so doing, established the precedent that the Lt. Governor would be the permanent successor to the Governor upon the latter's death, resignation, or removal from office.³ In 1834, Governor John Breathitt died in office and Lt. Governor James Turner Morehead succeeded to office.⁴ In 1839, Governor James Clark died in office and Lt. Governor Charles A. Wickliffe succeeded to office and finished the unexpired term. In 1850, Governor John J. Crittenden resigned to become the Attorney General of the United States and Lt. Governor John L. Helm succeeded to office for the remainder of the term. In 1862, Governor Beriah Magoffin resigned and Senate President James Fisher Robinson succeeded to office for the remainder of the term (Lt. Governor Linn Boyd had died in 1859). 1867, Governor John L. Helm died in office and Lt. Governor John W. Stevenson succeeded to office and was later elected in his own right.⁵ In 1871, Stevenson resigned to take a seat in the U.S. Senate and Kentucky Senate President Preston Leslie succeeded to Governor and was later elected in his own right.⁶ William Goebel lost the 1899 gubernatorial election to William S. Taylor, but challenged the results. While the General Assembly was considering the challenge, Goebel was shot. Days later, the General Assembly decided in favor of Goebel, ousting Taylor from office and making Goebel governor. Goebel was sworn in on his sick bed and died two days later. He was the only governor of any U.S. state to have been assassinated. His Lt. Governor, J. C. W. Beckham, succeeded him.⁷ In 1919, Governor Augustus Owsley Stanley resigned to take a seat in the U.S. Senate and Lt. Governor James D. Black succeeded him for the unexpired term. In 1939, Governor Albert Benjamin "Happy" Chandler, Sr. resigned to take a seat in the U.S. Senate and Lt. Governor Keen Johnson succeeded to office and was later elected in his own right.⁸ In 1950, Governor Earle C. Clements resigned to take a seat in the U.S. Senate and Lt. Governor Lawrence Wetherby succeeded to office and was later elected in his own right. In 1974, Governor Wendell H. Ford resigned to take a seat in the U.S. Senate and Lt. Governor Julian Carroll succeeded to Governor and was later elected in his own right.⁹

³ The Kentucky Encyclopedia – on line <http://www.kyenc.org/>

⁴ National Governors Association, Former Governors' Bios

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

⁷ The Kentucky Encyclopedia

⁸ National Governors Association, Former Governors' Bios

⁹ Ibid