



Massachusetts Office of Lt. Governor Data Sheet

As of July 17, 2016

History of Office

The Office of the Lt. Governor of Massachusetts was created with the constitution of 1780.¹

Origins of the Office

The Office of the Lt. Governor of Massachusetts was created with the constitution of 1780. The Lt. Governor assumes the duties of Governor as acting Governor, but does not become Governor, upon gubernatorial succession.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 1785, Governor John Hancock resigned due to illness, and Lt. Governor Thomas Cushing became acting Governor.³ In 1793, Governor John Hancock died in office, and Lt. Governor Samuel Adams became acting Governor and then was elected in his own right. In 1799, Governor Increase Sumner died in office, and Lt. Governor Moses Gill became acting Governor but died ten days before the term of Sumner ended. Without a Governor or Lt. Governor, the Governor's Council managed Commonwealth affairs until Governor Caleb Strong took office in 1800. In 1808, Governor James Sullivan died in office, and Lt. Governor Levi Lincoln Sr. became acting Governor. In 1825, Governor William Eustis died in office, and Lt. Governor Marcus Morton became acting Governor. In 1835, Governor John Davis resigned to take a seat

¹ Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 1780

² Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

³ National Governors Association, Former Governors' Bios

in the U.S. Senate. Lt. Governor Samuel Turell Armstrong became acting Governor. In 1874, Governor William B. Washburn resigned to take a seat in the U.S. Senate, and Lt. Governor Thomas Talbot became acting Governor. In 1896, Governor Frederic T. Greenhalge died in office, and Lt. Governor Roger Wolcott became acting Governor and then was elected in his own right. In 1969, Governor John A. Volpe resigned to become U.S. Secretary of Transportation, and Lt. Governor Francis W. Sargent became acting Governor for the remainder of the term. In 1997, Governor William Weld resigned when nominated to become U.S. Ambassador to Mexico, and Lt. Governor Paul Cellucci became acting Governor and then was elected in his own right. In 2001, Cellucci resigned to become U.S. Ambassador to Canada, and Lt. Governor Jane Swift became acting Governor.⁴

⁴ National Governors Association, Former Governors' Bios