

NATIONAL LIEUTENANT GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION: LIVING HISTORY

The National Lieutenant Governors Association (NLGA) is the professional association for the elected officials first in line of gubernatorial succession in every state and U.S. territory. NLGA maintains its founding mission providing a medium for the exchange of views and experiences on subjects of importance; fostering interstate cooperation; promoting the effectiveness of the Office of Lieutenant Governor; and by improving the efficiency of state and territorial administration through education on issues and leadership training.

Minutes from the December 4, 1962, NLGA organizational meeting show founding members were concerned the office of lieutenant governor was not sufficiently understood or appreciated by the general public or political scientists. Moreover, members wanted NLGA to help all states establish an office of lieutenant governor; to clarify legislative and executive responsibilities of lieutenant governors; and to improve continuity of administrative operations.

Forty-five states have a lieutenant governor. In 2005, New Jersey voters approved creation of the office of lieutenant governor electing the first in 2009. Including New Jersey, twenty-five lieutenant governors are elected to office with the governor, while eighteen are elected separately.

Today, twenty-three lieutenant governors are Acting Governor when the governor is out of state. Thirty NLGA members preside over their state Senates and more than half cast tie-breaking votes. A few examples of this responsibility include the Virginia lieutenant governor casting 28 tie-breaking senate votes in the 2013 legislative session. In 2006, the South Carolina lieutenant governor campaigned that his parliamentary rulings stopped \$1.5-billion in taxes. Most lieutenant governors advance a legislative agenda. They are the only state leaders with powers in both the executive and legislative branches.

To support these roles, the National Conference of Lieutenant Governors (NCLG) was founded in 1962. From 1966 - 2013, NCLG/NLGA was affiliated with The Council of State Governments (CSG). NCLG was staffed by CSG with Edward Feigenbaum as Director from 1983 – 1988. In 1988, NCLG became financially independent. Gail Manning assumed daily operations becoming Director in 1991. In 2002, Julia Hurst became Executive Director. That year, Hurst oversaw a name change to the National Lieutenant Governors Association (NLGA) and adoption of a new logo. In 2013, NLGA became a fully independent non-profit corporation based in Kentucky.

NLGA published books on the office of lieutenant governor and its powers in 1983, 1987, and 1996. NLGA published issue reports including a Report on Volunteerism (1978), Education and Economic Development in a Global Economy (1986), and a Report on Youth Suicide Prevention (1987). In 2002, the web site www.nlga.us was launched. The current site was launched in 2013.

Lieutenant governors leverage their office collectively through NLGA to advance life-saving issues. Since 2001, lieutenant governors distributed more than 3-million gun locks through Project Childsafe. The effort was recognized by The Future of Children for reducing childhood death. From 2006 to 2012, NLGA worked to “End Cervical Cancer in our Lifetime.” That public health campaign was recognized as one of the top six association programs in the nation and won an Addy. The 2008 - 2011 "Lieutenant Governors' Challenge" won recognition from the American College of Cardiology. In 2010, NLGA and its Director were recognized by the American Steel Industry with a national award for success developing public-private partnerships.

For the past 100 years, one in every four governors was first was a member of NLGA. The occupants of the office of lieutenant governor have a greater success rate of becoming governor than any other local, state or Congressional officeholder, according to 2006 research commissioned by NLGA.

In 2005, USA Today wrote, “Lieutenant governors, once the fifth wheels of U.S. politics, are playing an increasingly significant, visible, and controversial role in state government.” NLGA will continue to work with members in leading today, preparing for tomorrow.

*Prepared by NLGA Director Julia Hurst
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