



National Lieutenant Governors Association

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“It’s Twice as Good to be Lieutenant Governor”

“It’s twice as good to be lieutenant governor,” wrote University of Virginia’s Dr. Larry Sabato, one of the nation’s most quoted college professors in research released yesterday ([April 22, 2010 report](#)). Dr. Sabato’s Center for Politics staff examined the success rate since 1984 of state attorneys general in becoming governor. They found lieutenant governors have a success rate twice as high as attorneys general at becoming governor.

“What is unexpected is that, over time, so few state attorneys general actually do go on to the governorship. Since 1984, there have been exactly 250 state attorneys general, but only 28 (a mere 11%) became governor,” said Sabato. “This is precisely half the gubernatorial success rate of lieutenant governors. In the last quarter-century, fully 22% of the state No. 2’s became No. 1.”

“And given what has happened in statehouses across America in the past decade, lieutenant governors are recognized as more than stand-by equipment,” wrote Sabato on July 30, 2009, when releasing [additional study on the office](#). “Over a fifth (22 %) of all lieutenant governors in the past 25 years have gone on to become governor. Nearly a quarter (23.6%) of all recent state governors served as lieutenant governor prior to taking the top office,” he found.

Sabato noted the attorney general post is generally viewed as a more substantive one than the lieutenant governorship, since it is full time with a large staff. “Lieutenant governors across the nation also maintain substantial daily roles,” said National Lieutenant Governors Association (NLGA) Julia Hurst. “The official holding the office performs provided duties and may take initiative to execute additional tasks. But, the governor and the legislatures also hold roles in devolving functions and funding to the office of lieutenant governor. For example, the Indiana lieutenant governor has more than 40 statutory duties. ”

The NLGA notes that, collectively, lieutenant governors preside over state senates, manage departments and divisions of government, chair commissions, contribute to economic growth, and more. “And all lieutenant governors share the duty of gubernatorial succession, should it occur,” said Hurst.

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