



Tennessee Office of Lt. Governor Data Sheet

As of April 23, 2019

History of Office

The title of Lieutenant Governor was not used in Tennessee until 1951 as affirmation of the fact that the Speaker of the Tennessee Senate is first in line of succession to the Governor of the state. The actual title is Lt. Governor and Speaker of the Senate. The Speaker of the Tennessee Senate has existed since statehood and the first state Constitution of 1796.¹ See NLGA's Tennessee statutory duties page for the actual language.

Origins of the Office

The Speaker of the Tennessee Senate was created with statehood and the Constitution of 1796. The title of Lt. Governor was added in 1951.

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 1829, Governor Sam Houston resigned and Speaker of the Senate William Hall became Governor.² In 1869, Governor William Gannaway Brownlow resigned to take a seat in the U.S. Senate and Speaker of the Senate Dewitt Clinton Senter became Governor. In 1905, Governor James B. Frazier resigned to accept a seat in the U.S. Senate, which his successor, Speaker of the Senate John I. Cox appointed him to.³ In 1927, Governor Austin Peay died in office and Speaker of the Senate Henry H. Horton succeeded to the office of Governor.

¹ Tennessee Constitution of 1796

² National Governors Association, Former Governors' Bios

³ Ibid