

States Pursue Title of Lieutenant Governor

The last states without lieutenant governors may soon jump on the bandwagon. Two states, Tennessee and Arizona, are pursuing in this legislation session the creation of the lieutenant governor position as a statewide elected office. Rhode Island lawmakers are considering expanding powers of the lieutenant governor. Only five states do not have lieutenant governors.

In each case, lieutenant governor supporters say the position allows for gubernatorial succession that's clear to voters, while protecting the continuity of government.

However, in Arizona, Oregon and Wyoming, states without the lieutenant governor position, the secretary of state is first in line for gubernatorial succession.

"People who are voting for secretary of state should note they are also electing the person next in line for governor," Arizona

Sen. Chuck Gray told the Cronkite News Service.

An East Valley Tribune editorial agreed: "Arizonans always should keep in mind that the official who oversees the state election system suddenly could have power to veto legislation and control a large portion of state government, if the governor became unable to do the job."

Gubernatorial succession has happened five times in Arizona's 95-year history, most recently in 1997 when then-Secretary of State Jane Hull replaced Fife Symington. Voters may not realize that the secretary of state is next in line if the current governor dies or resigns since nearly all other states have a lieutenant governor, according to the East Valley Tribune editorial.

Four states place the senate president first in line to replace the governor, but

Tennessee and West Virginia give the title lieutenant governor to this officer in recognition of the vital succession duty. Yet, Tennessee this year is considering creating an office of lieutenant governor, which would be elected statewide.

"An elected lieutenant governor is a companion piece to any sort of sensible line of succession," Gov. Phil Bredesen told *The Tennessean*. Only three officials are elected statewide in Tennessee, the governor and two U.S. senators.

New Hampshire and Maine are the other states where the senate president is first in line of succession and with no use of the lieutenant governor title. Voters in New Jersey approved creation of a statewide elected office of lieutenant governor in 2005; the first will be elected next year in 2009.

States Lengthen School Days



In an effort to raise achievement in schools, some states are looking to lengthen the school day. A handful of states and cities, along with many charter schools, are seeking to add more hours, days and weeks to their school calendar, according to *The Washington Post*.

Massachusetts is spending \$13 million this year as part of a program to lengthen school days, according to Heidi Guarino, spokeswoman for the Massachusetts Department of Education. Ten schools made school days longer for the 2006-2007 school year and this school year, the number of schools increased to 19, Guarino said.

An additional 33 schools in 16 districts are in the pipeline and hope to convert to longer days in the future, according to *The Boston Globe*.

In most cases, the school days are expanded from six-hour days to eight- or nine-hour days.

The Commonwealth Readiness Project—the cornerstone of Gov. Deval Patrick's education priorities—issued an update in January 2008 that continued the recommendation of expanded teaching and learning time in Massachusetts.

"Expanded teaching and learning time, whether through full-day kindergarten, longer school days, summer learning programs or high-quality out-of-school or after-school programs, can provide increased opportunities that impact academic achievement, address out-of-school factors, such as health and nutrition and enhance support services including in-home resources and parenting skills," the report stated.

The Massachusetts report also said schools with longer days narrowed the achievement gap at a faster rate than the state and increased the number of students

at or above the proficiency level by 10.8 percent compared to the state rate of only 3.5 percent.

Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, chairman of the U.S. Senate's Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, joined with Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino, to celebrate expanded school day programs in Massachusetts at the Clarence R. Edwards Middle School in Charlestown in January. The middle school implemented the state's expanded learning time initiative in 2006.

"It gives students the time not only to master the basics, but also to expand their horizons through art, music, physical education and other activities. It gives teachers additional time for collaboration and planning to improve instruction," Kennedy said in a press release.

New York tacked on minutes a day for schools in 28 different school systems, *The Washington Post* reports. New Mexico is also spending slightly more than \$7 million to add 25 extra days at 29 schools where students need the most help, according to the *Post*.

from: 51 State News at 9 (March 2008)
distributed by Brevint...