

# LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH SERVICES

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(907) 465-3991  
[research@akleg.gov](mailto:research@akleg.gov)

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## Appointments Made to Fill Vacancies That Occurred More Than Thirty Days after Death or Resignation of Legislator

Susan Haymes, Legislative Analyst

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*You asked for the times in which a governor's appointment to fill a seat in the Alaska State Legislature occurred more than 30 days after the vacancy arose.*

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The procedures for filling legislative vacancies are outlined at AS 15.40.320 through AS 15.40.470. Under AS 15.40.320, the governor must appoint a “qualified person” to fill a vacancy within 30 days. The appointee must meet the qualifications of a legislator as defined in Article II, Section 2, of the Alaska Constitution, must be a member of the same political party as the predecessor, and is subject to confirmation by a majority of the members of the legislature in the same political party and the same chamber as was the predecessor. If the governor’s appointee is rejected, the governor must select another appointee—subject to confirmation—within ten days (AS 15.40.350).

The governor may not fill a vacancy if the remainder of the term of the outgoing legislator will expire, or if a vacancy in the state Senate will be filled by a special election before the legislature will next meet, convene, or reconvene (AS 15.40.320).

In the following table, we show, for each vacancy that was filled more than 30 days after the death or resignation of the legislator, the name of the former legislator, the effective date of the vacancy, the reason for the vacancy, the name of the appointee, the date the appointee was sworn in, the number of days the position was vacant, and any further notes on the appointment. We used the date of confirmation to determine whether the vacancy was filled before or after 30 days. In other words, we included those instances when an appointment was made before the 30-day deadline, but the confirmation occurred more than 30 days later. The table also includes those vacancies that were not filled by the governor under AS 15.40.320. We referred to the [\*Alaska Legislature Roster of Members 1913-2020\*](#) to compile this information.

We hope this is helpful. If you have questions or need additional information, please let us know.

Appointments Made to Fill Vacancies in the Alaska State Legislature That Occurred More Than Thirty Days After Death or Resignation, 1st Through 31st Legislatures							
Legislature	Former Legislator	Effective Date of Vacancy	Reason for Vacancy	Name of Appointee	Date Sworn In	Days Vacant	Further Notes
1st (1959-1960) Governor William Egan (D)	Representative John L. Rader (D)	April 27, 1959	Resignation (Appointment to Attorney General)	Blanche L. McSmith (D)	January 25, 1960	273	Blanche McSmith appointed, confirmed, and oath given 1/25/60.
2nd (1961-1962) Governor William Egan (D)	Senator William E. Beltz (D)	November 21, 1960	Death	Pearse M. Walsh (D)	January 23, 1961	63	Pearce Walsh appointed 12/9/60; confirmed and oath given 1/23/61.
	Representative Arthur D. Johnson (R)	December 8, 1961	Death	Grace A. Johnson (R)	January 22, 1962	45	Grace Johnson appointed 1/9/62; confirmed and oath given 1/22/62.
3rd (1963-1964) Governor William Egan (D)	Senator Elton E. Engstrom (R)	January 30, 1963	Death	Mildred H. Banfield (R)	March 20, 1963	49	Albert White appointed and rejected 2/8/63; Elton Engstrom, Jr. appointed 2/20/1963 and rejected 3/1/63. Wilma Rhodes appointed and rejected 3/4/63. William Feero appointed 3/6/63 and rejected 3/11/63. Mildred Banfield appointed and confirmed 3/20/63.
7th (1971-1972) Governor William Egan (D)	Senator Howard C. Bradshaw (D)	June 1, 1971	Resignation	H. D. "Pete" Meland (D)	January 10, 1972	223	H. D. Meland appointed 7/9/71, confirmed and oath given 1/10/72.
	Representative H. D. "Pete" Meland (D)	July 9, 1971	Resignation (Appointment to Senate)	Edward J. Flynn (D)	January 10, 1972	185	Edward Flynn appointed 7/9/71 when Meland appointed to Senate; confirmed and oath given 1/10/72.
	Senator Joseph P. Josephson (D)	August 1, 1972	Resignation	NA	NA	See Notes	Vacancy not filled.

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Legislature	Former Legislator	Effective Date of Vacancy	Reason for Vacancy	Name of Appointee	Date Sworn In	Days Vacant	Further Notes
8th (1973-1974) Governor William Egan (D)	Senator Lowell Thomas, Jr. (R)	December 2, 1974	Resignation (Elected to Lieutenant Governor)	NA	NA	See Notes	Vacancy not filled.
	Representative A. M. Saylor (R)	December 20, 1974	Resignation	NA	NA	See Notes	Vacancy not filled.
	Representative Andrew S. Warwick (R)	December 9, 1974	Resignation	NA	NA	See Notes	Vacancy not filled.
9th (1975-1976) Governor Jay Hammond (R)	Senator W. I. "Bob" Palmer (R)	November 30, 1974	Resignation	Clem V. Tillion (R)	January 20, 1975	51	Clem Tillion resigned from his House seat 1/20/75, to accept appointment and confirmation same day to the seat vacated by W.I. Palmer.
	Representative Willard L. Bowman (D)	December 4, 1975	Death	Lisa Rudd (D)	January 12, 1976	39	Lisa Rudd appointed and confirmed 1/12/76.
	Representative Helen M. Fischer (D)	June 30, 1976	Resignation	NA	NA	See Notes	Vacancy not filled.
	Representative Theodore G. Smith (D)	November 28, 1976	Resignation	NA	NA	See Notes	Vacancy not filled.
	Representative Ramona M. Kelley (D)	January 9, 1977	Resignation	NA	NA	See Notes	Vacancy not filled.
11th (1979-1980) Governor Jay Hammond (R)	Representative Bill Miles (D)	October 15, 1980	Resignation	NA	NA	See Notes	Vacancy not filled.

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15th (1987-1988) Governor Steve Cowper (D)	Senator Frank R. Ferguson (D)	December 18, 1986	Resignation	William L. "Willie" Hensley (D)	January 20, 1987	33	Willie Hensley appointed and confirmed 1/20/87.
	Senator Don Bennett (R)	August 30, 1987	Death	Ken Fanning (R)	December 11, 1987	103	Beverly Bennett appointed 9/23/87 and rejected 10/6/87. Ken Fanning appointed 12/8/87 and confirmed 12/11/87.
19th (1995-1996) Governor Tony Knowles (D)	Representative Eileen Panigeo MacLean (D)	December 7, 1995	Resignation	Don Long	January 11, 1996	35	Don Long was appointed on 1/4/96 and confirmed on 1/11/96.
22nd (2001-2002) Governor Tony Knowles (D)	Senator Drue Pearce (R)	June 18, 2001	Resignation (Position within U.S. Dept. of Interior)	Ben Stevens (R)	August 6, 2001	49	Ben Stevens was appointed and confirmed on 8/6/01.
23rd (2003-2004) Governor: Frank Murkowski (R)	Representative Lisa Murkowski (R)	December 20, 2002	Resignation (Appointment to U.S. Senate)	Nancy Dahlstrom (R)	January 21, 2003	32	Nancy Dahlstrom was appointed on 1/14/03 and confirmed on 1/21/03.
	Senator Robin L. Taylor (R)	September 15, 2003	Resignation (Position in Dept. of Transportation and Public Facilities)	Bert Stedman (R)	November 12, 2003	58	Bert Stedman appointed 11/10/03 and confirmed 11/12/03.
	Representative Jim Whitaker (R)	October 27, 2003	Resignation (Election as Mayor of Fairbanks)	Nick Stepovich (R)	December 4, 2003	38	Nick Stepovich appointed 12/3/03 and confirmed 12/4/03.
	Senator Scott Ogan (R)	August 25, 2004	Resignation	Charlie Huggins (R)	September 28, 2004	34	Charlie Huggins appointed 9/28/04 and confirmed 9/28/04.

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Legislature	Former Legislator	Effective Date of Vacancy	Reason for Vacancy	Name of Appointee	Date Sworn In	Days Vacant	Further Notes
26th (2009-2010) Governor Sarah Palin (R) Resigned July 3, 2009 Governor Sean Parnell (R) Assumed Office July 26, 2009	Senator Kim Elton (D)	March 2, 2009	Resignation (Position within U.S. Dept. of Interior)	Dennis Egan (D)	April 19, 2009	48	Tim Grussendorf appointed 3/30/09 and rejected 4/1/09. Joe Nelson appointed 4/6/09 and rejected 4/10/09. Dennis Egan appointed and confirmed 4/19/09.
	Senator Gene Therriault (R)	September 13, 2009	Resignation (Position within Governor's Office)	John Coghill (R)	October 27, 2009	44	John Coghill appointed and confirmed on 10/27/09.
	Representative Richard Foster (D)	October 13, 2009	Death	Neal Foster (D)	November 15, 2009	33	Neal Foster appointed 11/10/09 and confirmed 11/15/09.
	Representative John Coghill (R)	October 27, 2009	Resignation (Appointment to Senate)	Tammie Wilson (R)	December 2, 2009	36	Tammie Wilson appointed 11/24/09 and confirmed 12/2/09.
	Representative Nancy Dahlstrom (R)	May 31, 2010	Resignation (Position within Governor's Office)	NA	NA	See Notes	Vacancy not filled.
28th (2013-2014) Governor Sean Parnell (R)	Representative Beth Kerttula (D)	January 21, 2014	Resignation	Sam Kito, III (D)	February 25, 2014	35	Sam Kito was appointed and confirmed 2/25/14.

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30th (2017-2018) Governor Bill Walker (I)	Representative Dean Westlake (D)	December 15, 2017	Resignation	John Lincoln	January 31, 2018	47	John Lincoln was appointed 1/24/18 and confirmed 1/31/18.
	Senator Mike Dunleavy (R)	January 15, 2018	Resignation	Mike Shower	February 22, 2018	38	Mike Shower was appointed 2/20/18 and confirmed 2/22/18.
	Senator Kevin Meyer (R)	December 3, 2018	Resignation (Elected Lt. Governor)	NA	NA	See Notes	Vacancy not filled.
	Representative Dan Saddler (R)	December 7, 2018	Resignation (Position within Dept. of Natural Resources)	NA	NA	See Notes	Vacancy not filled.
31st (2019-2020) Governor Mike Dunleavy (R)	Nancy Dahlstrom (R)	December 5, 2018	Resignation (Appointed to Commissioner of Corrections)	Sharon Jackson	January 17, 2019	43	Nancy Dahlstrom was elected in November 2018. She was appointed to Commissioner of Corrections 12/5/18, creating a vacancy. Sharon Jackson was appointed on 12/20/18 and confirmed on 1/17/19.
	Senator Chris Birch (R)	August 7, 2019	Death	Josh Revak	November 2, 2019	87	Laddie Shaw appointed on 8/30/19 and rejected 9/19/19. Josh Revak appointed on 9/27/19 and confirmed on 11/2/19.
	Representative Gary Knopp (R)	July 31, 2020	Death	NA	NA	See Notes	Vacancy not filled.
<p><b>NOTES:</b> The table includes those vacancies in which the appointee was confirmed after the 30-day period and vacancies not filled by the governor under AS 15.40.320. To calculate the number of days the position remained vacant we subtracted the effective date of the vacancy from the date sworn in. In those instances in which the vacancy was not filled, the position was filled by a member elected by the voters when the Legislature next convened.</p> <p><b>SOURCE:</b> Alaska Legislature Roster of Members 1913-2018 at <a href="http://akleg.gov/docs/pdf/ROSTERALL.pdf">http://akleg.gov/docs/pdf/ROSTERALL.pdf</a>.</p>							