

Lieutenant Governor

The function of the Lieutenant Governor is to act as Governor if the Governor is removed from office or is unable to perform the duties of the office, to be the presiding officer of the Senate, to serve as acting Governor when the Governor is absent from the state, and to discharge other duties as prescribed by law.

The Lieutenant Governor serves by tradition as Chair of the Senate Rules Committee. The Lieutenant Governor is a member of the State Finance Committee, State Capitol Committee, the Washington Health Care Facilities Authority, the Washington Higher Education Facilities Authority, and the State Medal of Merit Committee.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

The function of the Lieutenant Governor is to serve as presiding officer (President) of the Senate, serve as acting Governor when the Governor is absent from the state, act as Governor if the Governor is removed from office or is unable to perform the duties of the office, manage a state agency and to discharge other duties as prescribed by law.

Acting Governor

While the Acting Governor role grants the Lieutenant Governor all of the powers and responsibilities of the governorship, in practical application it entails the Lieutenant Governor signing administrative and legal directives and being available for critical decisions. The Lieutenant Governor typically would not make or propose policy changes or new initiatives while serving as Acting Governor, but does hold that authority.

The role of Acting Governor can be an especially important one in states of emergency. Over the years there have been several instances in which the Lieutenant Governor stood in for the Governor to preside over emergency operations following devastating floods, forest fires, extreme snow storms, wind damage, extended power outages and other natural disasters. In such circumstances, the Lieutenant Governor may officially declare a state of emergency, receive up-to-date briefings by appropriate state officials, visit the incident command center, make statements to the media or conduct press conferences to relay public safety information, visit with emergency areas, and tour impacted areas.

President of the Senate

As president of the State Senate, the Lieutenant Governor stands at the rostrum in Senate chambers whenever the Senate is in session, where he leads the parliamentary discussion as legislation is being debated. If there is a dispute on the floor, or if there is a question on the procedural correctness or legality of a motion, the Lieutenant Governor makes a ruling on the matter.

The Lieutenant Governor also presides over joint sessions of the State Senate and House of Representatives, which notably occurs during the Governor's annual State of the State Address, and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court's State of the Judiciary Address, in addition to other lower-profile joint sessions.

The Lieutenant Governor chairs the Senate Committee on Rules, the 21-member body that determines which legislation advances to the floor of the Senate for debate. The Lieutenant Governor is a voting member of the Rules Committee.

Appointments

The Lieutenant Governor, by statute, makes appointments to over 35 committees, boards and commissions including:

- Legislative youth advisory council, RCW 28A.300.801.
- Civil legal aid oversight committee, RCW 2.53.010;
- Office of public defense advisory committee, RCW 2.70.030;
- Washington state gambling commission, RCW 9.46.040;
- Sentencing guidelines commission, RCW 9.94A.860;
- State building code council, RCW 19.27.070;
- Women's history consortium board of advisors, RCW 27.34.365;
- Financial literacy public-private partnership, RCW 28A.300.450;
- Joint administrative rules review committee, RCW 34.05.610;

- Capital projects advisory review board, RCW 39.10.800;
- Select committee on pension policy, RCW 41.04.276;
- Legislative ethics board, RCW 42.52.310; and
- Washington citizens' commission on salaries, RCW 43.03.305;

Office of the Lieutenant Governor

In addition to responsibilities set out by the state's Constitution, and additional duties assigned by statute, the Lieutenant Governor leads the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, a state agency that maintains policy and programming initiatives. These initiatives include Economic Development, Trade, and Housing.

Constituent Relations/Outreach

Constituent outreach and inclusion are top priorities for the Lieutenant Governor. He is dedicated to engaging with Washingtonians, and connecting them with needed services. The Lieutenant Governor fiercely advocates for equal access to opportunity for all—including communities often left underserved.

Economic Development and Economic Development

The Lieutenant Governor by law chairs the Legislative Committee on Economic Development and International Relations (LCEDIR). This 13-member panel is comprised of an evenly split membership of House and the Senate members, appointed by the Lieutenant Governor. Committee meetings are held about quarterly at the discretion of the Lieutenant Governor, who also determines which topics are presented.

In addition to his committee work, the Lieutenant Governor continually meets with leaders in government, business, industry, and education on economic development issues. Throughout the year, the Lieutenant Governor represents the State of Washington to visiting foreign officials. The Lieutenant Governor also reaches out to Washington state's diverse ethnic groups by participating in significant cultural events, dedicating staff work to year-round community outreach, and by building relationships with cultural, tribal, ethnic, and religious leaders around the state.

By statute, the Lieutenant Governor serves as one of the statewide board directors of the Washington State Consular Association. The Washington State Consular Association is an honor organization whose members serve as ambassadors of trade and goodwill to foreign nations through a variety of initiatives, and is composed of dignitaries, in Washington state, who formally represent 41 foreign nations.

Committee Responsibilities

As part of his duties, the Lieutenant Governor serves by statute on 10 committees or boards, many in association with other elected officials. These include the aforementioned Senate Committee on Rules, and the Legislative Committee on Economic Development and International Relations.

Additionally, the Lieutenant Governor serves on the following boards and committees:

- State Capitol Committee: Sets policy direction and provides oversight for capital buildings and grounds management.
- State Finance Committee: Sets state bonding investment strategies for state finances.
- Washington Health Care Facilities Board: Provides tax-exempt financing for capital funding of health care facilities.
- Washington Higher Education Facilities Board: Provides tax-exempt financing for capital funding of higher education facilities.
- Capital Furnishings Preservation Committee: Raises funds for maintenance and restoration of historic furniture.
- Medal of Valor Committee: Selects honorees for the Washington state Medal of Valor award.
- Medal of Merit Nominating Committee: Selects honorees for Medal of Merit Award, recognizing individuals for outstanding service to Washington state.

