
OLR Bill Analysis

HB 7223

AN ACT CONCERNING THE ORDER OF GUBERNATORIAL SUCCESSION UNDER CERTAIN PERMANENT AND TEMPORARY CIRCUMSTANCES.

SUMMARY

Under the state constitution, if the office of the governor is vacant, the lieutenant governor, followed by the Senate president pro tempore, exercises the governor's power and duties. This bill establishes an extended statutory line of gubernatorial succession should the offices of governor, lieutenant governor, and president pro tempore all be vacant and no person can constitutionally succeed to those offices (see BACKGROUND).

Specifically, after the president pro tempore, the order would be as follows: (1) speaker of the House of Representatives, (2) attorney general, (3) state treasurer, (4) state comptroller, (5) secretary of the state, (6) House majority leader, and (7) Senate majority leader. Under the bill, only if all the offices earlier in the line of succession are vacant will the next officer in line become governor.

Under the bill, if a vacancy occurs in the office of the governor due to death, resignation, refusal to serve, or removal from office, as is the case under the constitutional line of succession, upon taking the oath of office, the officer serves until a new governor is chosen at the next regular election and duly qualified. Similarly, in the case of impeachment or the governor's absence from the state, if the offices of the lieutenant governor and president pro tempore are vacant, the next officer in line, as described above, temporarily exercises the governor's power and duties until the governor has been acquitted or has returned.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2025

BACKGROUND***Constitutional Line of Succession***

Under the state constitution, if a permanent vacancy occurs in the office of the governor (due to death, resignation, refusal to serve, or removal from office), the lieutenant governor succeeds to the office, followed by the president pro tempore. In either case, the officer serves as governor until a new governor is chosen at the next regular election and duly qualified. When a governor is being impeached or is absent from the state, these officers temporarily exercise the governor's powers and duties, if and until the governor is acquitted of impeachment, or until the governor returns from his or her absence.

If the president pro tempore is elevated to a higher office and the Senate is in session, it must, within 15 days of the president pro tempore's taking his or her new oath of office, elect one of its members as president pro tempore. If the General Assembly is not in session, the secretary of the state must convene the Senate within 15 days of a vacancy for the purpose of electing a president pro tempore (Conn. Const. art. IV, §§ 18-20).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 19 Nay 0 (03/26/2025)