

STATE OF NEW YORK

9575

IN SENATE

May 16, 2024

Introduced by Sen. SKOUFIS -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Investigations and Government Operations

AN ACT to amend the public officers law, in relation to the appointment of a lieutenant-governor and the line of succession and establishes the committee on gubernatorial disability; and to repeal article 1-A of the New York state defense emergency act of 1951 relating thereto

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Section 43 of the public officers law, as renumbered by
2 chapter 649 of the laws of 1922, is amended to read as follows:

3 § 43. Filling other vacancies. 1. If a vacancy shall occur, otherwise
4 than by expiration of term, with no provision of law for filling the
5 same, if the office be elective, the governor shall appoint a person to
6 execute the duties thereof until the vacancy shall be filled by an
7 election. But if the term of such officer shall expire with the calendar
8 year in which the appointment shall be made, or if the office be appoin-
9 tive, the appointee shall hold for the residue of the term.

10 2. a. In the case of a vacancy in the office of the lieutenant-gover-
11 nor other than by expiration of the term of office, the governor shall,
12 within sixty days from the date of creation of the vacancy, nominate an
13 individual to hold the office of lieutenant-governor for the remainder
14 of the term. This individual shall be required to satisfy the qualifica-
15 tions of eligibility for office as the governor. The governor shall
16 convey the nomination to the temporary president of the senate and the
17 speaker of the assembly and shall make public the nomination. The nomi-
18 nee shall take office upon confirmation by a vote in each house of the
19 legislature by a majority of all members elected to such house taken
20 within sixty days of receiving the nomination. If either house of the
21 legislature shall vote to reject the nomination within said time period,
22 the nomination shall be deemed rejected and the governor shall have
23 thirty days from the date of the first vote of rejection to nominate
24 another individual to serve as lieutenant-governor, who shall then be
25 subject to the confirmation procedure described in this paragraph except

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 that the legislature shall have thirty days rather than sixty days to
2 act. If the legislature fails to either confirm or reject any nomination
3 for lieutenant-governor within sixty days of receiving the first nomi-
4 nation or thirty days for any subsequent nomination to fill a specific
5 vacancy, the nominee shall assume the office of lieutenant-governor.

6 b. During the sixty-day and thirty-day periods, the governor shall
7 have the power to withdraw a nomination for a replacement lieutenant
8 governor. If a governor withdraws a nomination in either time period,
9 then the next time period shall not commence, unless the withdrawal
10 power has already been exercised once. Where the governor exercises the
11 withdrawal power in the first and only instance the governor shall have
12 the same amount of time as the governor previously had to nominate
13 another candidate, and the legislature shall have the same amount of
14 time as previously conferred to confirm or reject the nomination. If a
15 governor chooses to withdraw a nominee and nominate a new person, any
16 change in nomination thereafter shall result in the next time period or
17 replacement mechanism commencing.

18 c. If the legislature rejects the governor's nominations in both the
19 sixty-day and thirty-day time periods, then the governor shall imme-
20 diately have power to appoint a lieutenant-governor from the following
21 list: comptroller, attorney general, and the heads of executive depart-
22 ments who have been confirmed by the legislature for their current posi-
23 tion, excluding acting heads of executive departments.

24 d. The governor may not appoint anyone for lieutenant governor who was
25 previously nominated and rejected by the legislature during the sixty-
26 day and thirty-day time period.

27 e. When the governor appoints a lieutenant governor from the aforemen-
28 tioned list of officials, the chosen candidate shall immediately resign
29 from such official's former position should such official choose to
30 accept the appointment and shall not simultaneously serve in more than
31 one government office.

32 f. If the governor shall not nominate an individual to hold the office
33 of lieutenant-governor within sixty days of the creation of the vacancy
34 or within thirty days of the rejection of a nomination by a house of the
35 legislature, the legislature shall fill the position in accordance with
36 the procedure provided by law for filling vacancies in the office of the
37 attorney general and comptroller.

38 § 2. The public officers law is amended by adding two new sections 44
39 and 45 to read as follows:

40 § 44. Persons eligible to succeed governor. 1. For the purposes of
41 sections six and nine of article IV of the constitution, if the office
42 of governor becomes vacant or if the governor shall be impeached or
43 otherwise unable to discharge the powers and duties of the office of the
44 governor, and each of the lieutenant governor, the temporary president
45 of the senate, and the speaker of the assembly is either unable to act
46 as governor or their office is vacant, then the officer of the state who
47 is highest in order of the following list shall act as governor until
48 the earlier of the cessation of the vacancy or inability of the governor
49 or lieutenant-governor or until a new governor shall be elected: comp-
50 troller, attorney general, and secretary of state, provided that such
51 officer otherwise meets the criteria set forth in the constitution to
52 serve as governor. To be able to act as governor, an official on this
53 list must have been confirmed by the senate or elected by the voters to
54 lead their respective department.

55 2. Whenever any officer listed in subdivision one of this section
56 shall act as governor, that officer shall be required to vacate that

1 officer's prior position. Notwithstanding the foregoing, if any officer
2 listed in subdivision one of this section shall act as governor in the
3 case of impeachment of the governor or in the case the governor is
4 unable to discharge the powers and duties of the office, that officer
5 shall not be required to vacate that officer's prior position unless
6 otherwise required by this subdivision, but that person shall not be
7 permitted to discharge any powers and duties of that officer's prior
8 position until that person no longer holds the office of governor.
9 However, if any officer acts as governor beyond sixty consecutive days,
10 that officer shall then be required to vacate that officer's prior posi-
11 tion, and such vacation shall not render that officer ineligible to
12 continue to act as governor.

13 3. Any officer listed in subdivision one of this section may decline
14 to act as governor, thus making them unable to act as governor. In the
15 event any officer listed in subdivision one of this section is unable to
16 act as governor or does not possess the same qualifications of eligibil-
17 ity for office as the governor, the officer next highest in order who
18 does meet the qualifications of eligibility shall act as governor until
19 the earlier of the cessation of the vacancy or inability of the governor
20 or lieutenant-governor or the election of a new governor.

21 4. Any official acting as governor under this section shall discharge
22 all the powers and duties of the office of governor as if the individual
23 had been elected governor.

24 § 45. Committee on gubernatorial disability. 1. There shall be a
25 committee on gubernatorial disability, consisting of the lieutenant-gov-
26 ernor, attorney general, comptroller, and heads of the following depart-
27 ments and offices, provided they have been confirmed by the senate for
28 the commissioner position:

29 a. division of criminal justice services.

30 b. department of health.

31 c. division of human rights.

32 d. department of labor.

33 e. office of mental hygiene.

34 f. department of state.

35 2. The committee on gubernatorial disability shall perform the func-
36 tions set forth in article IV, section 9 of the state constitution.

37 § 3. Article 1-A of the New York state defense emergency act, as added
38 by chapter 343 of the laws of 1959, is REPEALED.

39 § 4. This act shall take effect on the same date as a "CONCURRENT
40 RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND ASSEMBLY proposing an amendment to article
41 4 and article 6 of the constitution, in relation to the filling of
42 vacancies in the office of lieutenant-governor or governor and the
43 powers and duties of such offices" takes effect, in accordance with
44 section 1 of article 19 of the constitution.