

## STATE OF PLAY: Governors as Potential Vice Presidential Picks

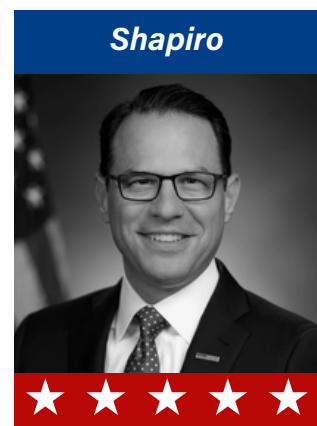
---

As the 2024 election season unfolds, the potential for sitting governors to be chosen as vice presidential picks adds an intriguing layer to the political landscape. The scenarios in states where governors might ascend to the vice presidency is varied and there are implications of such moves to consider. Each state's unique situation offers a glimpse into how these developments could reshape state leadership and influence broader electoral outcomes

### **Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro (D)**

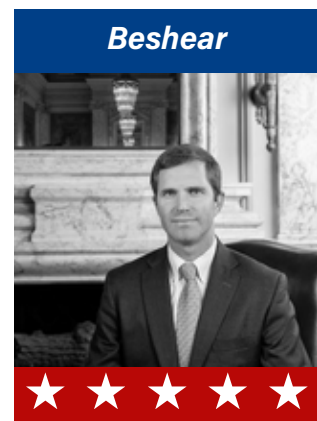
There is nothing in the Pennsylvania constitution that would prevent Governor Shapiro from carrying out his duties while pursuing a nomination for higher political office. Should Shapiro be elected Vice President, Lieutenant Governor Austin Davis (D) would become governor for the remainder of the term, which ends on January 19, 2027. While serving as lieutenant governor, Davis has focused on gun violence prevention, supporting small and minority-owned businesses, and advocating for the working class.

In the case Davis should become governor under section 13, President Pro Tempore Kim Ward (R) of the Senate shall become lieutenant governor for the remainder of the term.



### **Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear (D)**

In Kentucky, the constitution does not prevent a governor from acting out their duties and campaigning for a higher office at the same time. Should Governor Beshear be elected as Vice President, Lieutenant Governor Jacqueline Coleman (D) would exercise all the power and authority appertaining to the office of governor until the end of Beshear's term on December 7, 2027. Coleman would be considered acting governor and still serve as lieutenant governor. During her time as lieutenant governor, she has prioritized public education, mental health, and the economy.



### **Maryland Governor Wes Moore (D)**

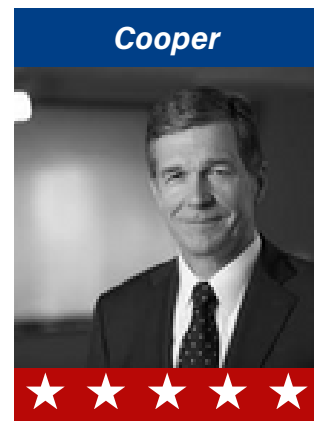
Governor Moore is not prevented by the state constitution from seeking another office while serving his duties as governor. Were he to resign his office, Lieutenant Governor Aruna Miller (D) would serve the remainder of his term ending January 20, 2027.

The lieutenant governor's office would then be filled by an appointee of Miller's choosing, confirmed by the general assembly.



### **North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper (D)**

Governor Cooper is the outgoing Governor of North Carolina; he is term limited from running for re-election. There is nothing in the state constitution that would prevent Cooper from carrying out his duties while pursuing a higher political office. In the unlikely event he does need to resign before the end of his term, Lieutenant Governor Mark Robinson (R) would become governor until the remainder of the term which ends on January 1, 2025. Robinson is currently the Republican candidate for governor going up against Attorney General Josh Stein (D).



### **Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer (D)**

Governor Whitmer indicated to reporters on July 22 that she is not interested in serving in the Vice President position and would decline if offered. That said, in the case of the resignation of the Michigan Governor, Lieutenant Governor Garlin Gilchrist II (D) would become governor for the remainder of her term, which ends on January 1, 2027.

If Gilchrist is to become governor, the line of succession for lieutenant governor devolves to the elected President Pro Tempore of the Senate, Jeremy Moss (D).



### California Governor Gavin Newsom (D)

Governor Newsom is not prevented from running for another office while fulfilling his duties of governor. Were he to be chosen to run for, and then be elected to the office of Vice President, the then lieutenant governor, Eleni Kounalakis (D), would assume the governorship for the remainder of his term ending on January 4, 2027.

In the event Kounalakis becomes governor, the lieutenant governor's office would be filled by a nominee of her choosing confirmed by the state legislature. Of note, Kounalakis has announced her candidacy for the governor's office in the 2026 general election.



### Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker (D)

In Illinois, the governor is not prevented from fulfilling his duties while seeking another office. Were Pritzker to leave office to serve as Vice President, Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton (D), would fulfill the rest of his term ending on January 11, 2027. In her current position, Stratton has prioritized equity, agriculture, and support for women.

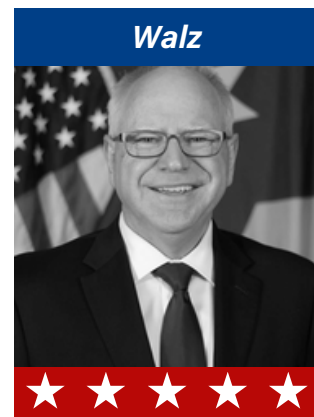
The lieutenant governor's office would remain vacant.



### Minnesota Governor Tim Walz (DFL)

Governor Walz is not prevented by the state constitution from seeking another office while serving as governor. In the case of his resignation from the office, Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan (D) would serve the remainder of his term ending January 4, 2027. Flanagan has prioritized child tax credits, paid family medical leave, and affordable housing.

The last elected presiding officer of the Senate would become lieutenant governor. In this case, Senate Majority Leader Erin Murphy (DLF) would take over for Flanagan.



## Potential Down-Ballot Impacts

- **DLCC** stated, “...we must recommit to the vital work of building strong campaigns in states across the country and winning this election by supporting Democrats up and down the ticket.” **DLCC Chair** and **New York** Senate President Pro Tempore and Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins (D) endorsed Vice President Harris for the Democratic presidential nomination.
- **Democrats in US Senate and House** races hope Harris’ entry will energize the party and voters.
- **Missouri Democrats**, including a state senate candidate, believe the change will benefit the party and will bring a sense of excitement as well as increase the turnout of younger voters.
- **South Dakota Democrats** hope Harris’ candidacy will increase voter excitement and may influence the state’s ballot measure to reinstate the right to abortion.
- **North Carolina Democrats** believe the change may affect the upcoming governor’s race and may motivate more younger voters to show up on election day.
- **Iowa Democrats** hope Biden’s decision will positively influence down-ballot races and improve Democrats’ chances for contested state legislature seats.
- **Texas Democrats** are skeptical that Harris’ nomination would affect other down-ballot races.
- **Florida Democrats** believe the state is now in play at the top of the ballot as well as down-ballot.
- **Mike Lawler**, a Republican in **New York’s** 17th House District, does not think much will change because Harris “worked hand-in-glove with President Biden over the last three and a half years.” **Republicans in Iowa** agree with this assessment.

Understanding the state-level implications of sitting governors as potential vice presidential picks is crucial. These developments can impact state leadership and the broader political landscape. For insights on how these changes might affect your business and the future political arena, please contact [Johnathan Lozier](#), Stateside Senior Vice President and Principal.

*Stateside is the nation’s largest, and industry-leading, government relations firm. Based in DC, our expertise encompasses all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Client partners include corporations, trade associations, advocacy coalitions, federal government and non-profits.*