



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SOUTH CAROLINA
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**November 6, 2012, General Election
South Carolina Constitutional Amendment Question**

The League of Women Voters of South Carolina wants to make the PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT more easily understood by the voters of South Carolina.

The League of Women Voters only supports or opposes issues that our members have studied and reached consensus on. We have not taken a position for or against this proposed amendment.

The following Constitutional Amendment Question will appear on November 6, 2012, General Election Ballots:

Amendment

Beginning with the general election of 2018, must Section 8 of Article IV of the Constitution of this State be amended to provide that the Lieutenant Governor must be elected jointly with the Governor in a manner prescribed by law; and upon the joint election to add Section 37 to Article III of the Constitution of this State to provide that the Senate shall elect from among the members thereof a President to preside over the Senate and to perform other duties as provided by law; to delete Sections 9 and 10 of Article IV of the Constitution of this State containing inconsistent provisions providing that the Lieutenant Governor is President of the Senate, ex officio, and, while presiding in the Senate, has no vote unless the Senate is equally divided; to amend Section 11 to provide that the Governor shall fill a vacancy in the Office of Lieutenant Governor by appointing a successor with the advice and consent of the Senate; and to amend Section 12 of Article IV of the Constitution of this State to conform appropriate references?

Explanation

A “Yes” vote will require, from 2018 onward, the Governor and Lieutenant Governor to run on the same ticket and be elected to office jointly. As a result, the Lieutenant Governor will no longer preside over the Senate and the Senate will elect their presiding officer from within the Senate body.

A “No” vote maintains the current method of electing the Governor and Lieutenant Governor separately. The Lieutenant Governor shall continue to serve as President of the Senate.

Explanation of the Office of Governor and Lieutenant Governor, South Carolina

The Governor is the Chief Executive Officer of the State. The Lieutenant Governor is the second ranking executive officer of the Executive branch. Both are elected every four years by a plurality vote and are limited to two terms.

The chief responsibility of the Lieutenant Governor is to assume the duties of the governor should the Governor die, leave the State for a significant length of time, become ill or disabled; i.e., be unable to complete the term. Otherwise, the Lieutenant Governor has only two responsibilities: to preside over the Senate (entitled to a vote only in case of a tie) and to oversee and operate the state Office on Aging.

The office of Lieutenant Governor is unique in that (s)he is the only state elected official who is a part of both the legislative and the executive branches of government.

Under the current provisions of the Constitution, the Governor and the Lieutenant Governor run and are elected on separate tickets (may or may not be members of the same political party).

This amendment proposes two major changes:

1. Requires that a candidate for Governor select a candidate to serve as Lieutenant Governor to run for election on a joint (single) ticket.
2. Removes the Lieutenant Governor as presiding officer of the Senate.

What Adoption of the Constitutional Amendment Would Mean

Beginning with the General Election of 2018 “a person seeking the office of Governor” . . . “shall select a qualified elector to serve as Lieutenant Governor . . . (c)andidates for the office of Governor and Lieutenant Governor must be elected jointly” . . . “so that each voter casts a single vote for the office of Governor and Lieutenant Governor.”

In case of a vacancy in the office of Lieutenant Governor, the Governor would appoint a successor subject to the “advice and consent of the Senate.”

The amendment would remove the Lieutenant Governor as the presiding officer of the Senate and provides that the Senate shall elect from its own members a President to preside over the Senate.

By running on the same ticket as the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor would be squarely in the executive branch of government, helping to ensure that the Governor’s agenda would be carried out in case the Governor should be unable to complete the term.

Similarly, by requiring that the Senate choose its own leadership as opposed to being presided over by the Lieutenant Governor, the amendment would place the Senate on the same footing as the House of Representative. Legislative leadership and decisions would be maintained in the legislative branch without crossover in the proceedings of the General Assembly by a member of the executive branch.

PROS

A single ticket election process would provide a more harmonious and cohesive executive policy, avoid a possible change of the executive agenda in “midstream,” and ensure continuity of that agenda in case the Governor is unable to complete the term. Also, it would clearly define the leadership roles and authority (power) balance between the two legislative branches and that of the executive branch.

The federal process of electing the President and Vice President on a single ticket has worked well.

CONS

The process of electing the Governor and Lieutenant Governor on a single ticket deprives the voter of the opportunity to “vote for the person” rather than a party label.

A single ticket election process places too much power in the hands of the Governor through the selection process and continuity of agenda.

NOTE

Election of candidates for Governor and Lieutenant Governor from opposing political parties has occurred 3 times in the history of the State (the last in 1998).

In 25 states, the Governor and the Lieutenant Governor are elected on the same ticket. A few states do not have an office of Lieutenant Governor.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

As in the case of the Federal election process for President and Vice President, a strong candidate for Lieutenant Governor can bolster the gubernatorial candidate’s chances at the polls and, reversely, a poor choice for Lieutenant Governor could jeopardize the whole ticket.

In South Carolina, as in many states, political party strength is defined by general geographic areas. A geographic choice for Lieutenant Governor may strengthen or weaken the gubernatorial candidate’s chances and/or impact the geographic political balance of the State.