

## It's about to be a whole new race in NJ, for No. 2, 1st Lt-Governor, NJ

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TRENTON, N.J. (AP) — Sometime in the next month, a political campaign like New Jersey has never seen before will launch: The race to be No. 2.

For the first time in November, New Jersey voters will elect a lieutenant governor, joining 44 other states that have such a position already.

The winners of the Tuesday's gubernatorial primary will have 30 days — that's until July 2 — to name their running mates. The governor and a lieutenant governor will be on the same ticket and listed together on the November ballot.

Will that make the coming days a mad scramble for the spots on the tickets? Will political people even want the job? What will the winner do for the government? Will the job become a springboard to being governor?

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Because it's the first time around, those answers aren't entirely clear.

But Ingrid Reed, who studies New Jersey politics at Rutgers University's Eagleton Institute, thinks it will make the campaign more exciting.

"I think it will be good for New Jersey," she said, "Especially this year with the novelty of it."

Until now, the state senate president has always stepped in when New Jersey's governor stepped down — or left the state, even for a few hours. But since 2001, two senate presidents have had extended stays as the head of two branches of state governments — Donald DiFrancesco, when Gov. Christie Whitman left to join President Bush's administration in 2001 and Richard Codey, when Gov. Jim McGreehey resigned in 2004 after announcing he was gay and had had an affair with a staff member.

In 2005, voters approved an amendment to the state constitution to create the lieutenant governor's job. Supporters also saw the job as a way to diversify the top level of New Jersey politics, which is dominated by white men.

Under the constitutional amendment, the lieutenant governor is expected to get some additional duty in the administration. The only job the lieutenant governor is legally off limits is state attorney general. The lieutenant governor's salary would be up to the governor.

None of the main candidates for governor have announced their running mates; and each has a different view of how the job would work.

Republican Chris Christie says his lieutenant would have a major role in pushing along economic development and trying to cut down overbearing regulations that keep companies out of New Jersey.

Republican Steve Lonegan opposed the constitutional amendment to create the job. He said that in a cost-cutting Lonegan administration, the role would be limited, perhaps to serving as a spokesperson.

He joked that his lieutenant governor would get "a small desk outside my office" and that the main duty would be opening mail.

"We're going to talk in five years and we're going to have another office with a million-dollar budget," Lonegan said. "As long as I'm not elected, I'll be happy to do it."

Assemblyman Joe Cryan, the chairman of the state Democratic Party, said Gov. Jon S. Corzine's pick would have an active role in the administration — doing a job that already exists. Depending on the person, he said, the lieutenant governor could be chief of staff, health commissioner, or fill some other job.

The campaign role is also unclear. Political scientists expect the candidates will be chosen by some of the same criteria used for picking vice-presidents.

"A lieutenant governor will be picked in an effort to fill in certain perceived gaps that the gubernatorial candidate might have: gender, race, geography, age," said Ben Dworkin, director of Rebovich Institute for New Jersey Politics at Rider University.

Also, to qualify for public campaign financing, lieutenant governor candidates must face off in at least one debate.

What is most sure about the position is that it will give someone a major boost in terms of name recognition, which could come in handy in political campaigns.

Besides the lieutenant governor, only the governor and two U.S. senators are elected statewide in a state divided between the Philadelphia and New York media markets. That means that most state legislators and even members of Congress aren't well known beyond their own area.

"The opportunity for everyone from Mahwah to Cape May to know your name is a unique situation," said Rider's Dworkin.

Julia Hurst, executive director of the National Lieutenant Governors Association, said that in the past 25 years, no job — not mayor, U.S. representative or state attorney general — has been a better springboard across the country to governor than lieutenant governor. Further said in the past century, one-fourth of the people who served as governor in the U.S. had been lieutenant governor before that.

In New Jersey, the angling for the job, at least so far, has been mostly behind the scenes.

Several lawmakers and local officials have been speculated as potential lieutenant governors.

The one who came closest is probably Trenton Mayor Douglas Palmer, a Democrat, who joked earlier this year that attending an event with Corzine felt like an audition.

Another potential candidate, Newark Mayor Cory Booker, also a Democrat, said earlier this year that he wanted to remain in his current job.

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