

NEVADA'S PLURAL EXECUTIVE

- Six primary offices make up the Nevada executive branch
- Reflects a desire to disperse power
- The six offices are separately elected and provide a type of check within the executive branch on each other (in addition to the traditional checks between the legislative, executive and judicial branches.)

The Six Offices are:

- Governor
- Lt. Governor
- Secretary of State
- Attorney General
- Treasurer
- Controller

In addition there is an independently elected:

- Board of Regents
- State Board of Education
- However, the independence of these Boards is lessened as they report for budget and many policy matters to and/or through the Governor and legislature.

GOVERNOR: Key Roles

- Chief Executive
- Chief Legislator
- Chief of State (largely ceremonial, but very visible and time consuming)

Direct Authority:

- Oversees executive branch agencies
- Extensive appointment power (and does not need legislative approval)
- Budget preparation (greatly shapes policy agenda)
- Veto
- Power to call and define the limits of special sessions
- Serves on key boards and commissions (in addition to appointing people to boards and commissions)

Key limits on governor:

- Term (2)
- No item veto
- Uncertain reorganization power
- Revenue forecast not part of Gov. budget (done by a separate body and is binding on both the Governor and legislature)

Informal Powers:

- Popularity (public)
- Media relations
- Personal characteristics and skills
- Ambition

Informal Limits:

- Lack of partisan support
- Public opinion
- Competition from other power centers

Lt. Governor

- Independently elected and may be of a different party than the Governor
- Considered a “part-time” position
- Becomes Governor upon death of Governor, but also in cases where the Governor is absent from the state
- Power to act while the Governor is absent has been narrowly interpreted by the courts
- Presides as “President of the Senate” and can cast a vote in case of a tie
- Most important day-to-day role is to Chair State Commission on Tourism and State Commission on Economic Development.

- Indeed, key role is to pursue economic development interests of the state

Attorney General

- Most visible official after the Governor
- Chief legal advisor for the State (although not required to be a lawyer)
- Oversees multiple deputies (lawyers) who provide legal advice for state agencies
- Can issue “Advisory Opinions” although these do not have force of law (they give a sense of how the State interprets law – but can be ignored by the Courts and Legislature.)
- Represents the State in Court (usually through a Deputy)
- Serves on key boards and commissions (especially Board of Examiners)
- Submits a biennial report on the condition of law enforcement
- Oversees County District Attorneys, but mostly to step in only when a DA might have a conflict of interest

Secretary of State

- Primarily the “custodian of state records”
- Even though elected on a partisan basis, for many years was seen as more non-partisan and ministerial overseeing various aspects of State business. (This has changed with recent incumbents – later 1980s -- who have used the office to further political careers.)
- Issues certificates of incorporation

- Is the key oversight official for state elections, including maintaining voter registration statistics, filings for initiatives, referendums and recalls, and provides the official certification of votes to the Supreme Court for the official canvass
- Serves on key boards and commissions (especially Board of Examiners)

Controller

- Issues checks and warrants on behalf of the state
- Chief bookkeeper for the state issuing an annual report of state finances
- Performs audits

Treasurer

- Receives all funds paid to the state
- Invests State funds
- Oversees unclaimed property