

Gubernatorial Elections, Campaign Costs and Powers

By Thad Beyle

This article traces the governorship in recent decades. It examines who the governors are, how they became governors and some of their recent political history. The author discusses the timing and costs of gubernatorial elections and changes in gubernatorial powers.

The governors continue to be in the forefront of activity as we move into the 21st century. With Republican governors across the states serving as his major supporters and guides, Texas Gov. George W. Bush sought and won the presidency in the 2000 election. He became the fourth of the last five presidents who had served as governor just prior to seeking and winning the presidency.¹ When George H. W. Bush, a nongovernor, won the presidential election in 1988, he beat a governor, Michael Dukakis (D-Mass., 1975-1979 and 1983-1991). Clearly, presidential politics in the last quarter century following the Watergate scandal finds governors as major actors.

Additionally, the demands on the governors to propose state budgets and then to keep them in balance during the two recessions of the early 1990s and early 2000s has made that governor's chair a "hot seat" in more ways than one.² Currently, governors have moved from a half-decade of an economic boom, in which they could propose tax cuts and program increases, to a period in which there is more demand for program support and less income to use. Easy times have switched to hard times.³

Gubernatorial Elections

The 2002 elections were a banner year for changes in the governorships across the states. There were 36 gubernatorial elections and only 22 incumbents were eligible to seek another term (61 percent). That is the lowest number and percent of incumbents eligible for reelection between 1970 and 2002.

Six of these eligible incumbents decided not to seek another term. Two governors were moving on to seek another office: Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.) ran unsuccessfully for a U.S. Senate seat, while Howard Dean (D-Vt.) began a campaign for the 2004 Democratic nomination for president. Two other governors decided to retire after their first terms — George Ryan (R-Ill.) and Jesse Ventura (Reform-Minn.). Two other "accidental" governors, who succeeded to the governorship when the incumbent governor was appointed to a position in the Bush administration, found little support for their own candidacies and also retired from the governorship — Jane Swift (R-

Mass.) and Mark Schweiker (R-Pa.). So, these six seats added to the 14 other open seats meant that there were 20 open gubernatorial seats in 2002.

The 16 incumbents seeking reelection in 2002 had a 75 percent success rate. The 12 winning incumbents were Mike Huckabee (R-Ark.), Gray Davis (D-Calif.), Bill Owens (R-Colo.), John Rowland (R-Conn.), Jeb Bush (R-Fla.), Dirk Kempthorne (R-Idaho), Tom Vilsack (D-Iowa), Mike Johanns (R-Neb.), Kenny Guinn (R-Nev.), George Pataki (R-N.Y.), Bob Taft (R-Ohio) and Rick Perry (R-Texas) — 10 Republicans and two Democrats. Their average winning margin was just over 19 points, with margins ranging from 48 points for Guinn to tighter 6-point margins for Huckabee and Davis. The remaining 24 races were won by new governors. They were equally split between the two parties — 12 Democrats and 12 Republicans.

Four incumbent governors lost their bids to serve a second term, a 25 percent loss rate. The four losing incumbents were Don Siegelman (D-Ala.), Roy Barnes (D-Ga.), Jim Hodges (D-S.C.) and Scott McCallum (R-Wis.). The three unsuccessful Democrats were from the deep South, which continues its move toward the Republican side of the aisle, and the one unsuccessful Republican was an "accidental" governor who was not able to win the office on his own.

As can be seen in Table A, in the 466 gubernatorial elections held between 1970 and 2002, incumbents were eligible to seek another term in 354 (76 percent) of the contests; 274 eligible incumbents sought re-election (78 percent) and 207 of them succeeded (76 percent). Those who were defeated for re-election were more likely to lose in the general election than in their own party primary by a 3.5-to-1 ratio (See Table A).

Democratic candidates held a winning edge in these elections (55 percent). And in 187 races (40 percent) the results led to a party shift in which a candidate from a party other than the incumbent's party won. Yet these party shifts have evened out over the years so that the Democratic Party's leading margin in these party-shift wins is only two.⁴ But there have been some interesting patterns in these shifts over the past 33 years of gubernatorial elections.

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Table A: Gubernatorial Elections: 1970-2002

Year	Number of races	Number of incumbent governors											
		Democratic Winner		Eligible to run		Actually ran		Won		Lost			
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	In primary	In general election
1970	35	22	63	29	83	24	83	16	64	8	36	1 (a)	7 (b)
1971	3	3	100	0	0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1972	18	11	61	15	83	11	73	7	64	4	36	2 (c)	2 (d)
1973	2	1	50	1	50	1	100	...	...	1	100	1 (e)	...
1974	35	28 (f)	80	29	83	22	76	17	77	5	24	1 (g)	4 (h)
1975	3	3	100	2	66	2	100	2	100	...	...	...	...
1976	14	9	64	12	86	8	67	5	63	3	33	1 (i)	2 (j)
1977	2	1	50	1	50	1	100	1	100	...	...	...	...
1978	36	21	58	29	81	22	76	16	73	6	27	1 (k)	5 (l)
1979	3	2	67	0	0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1980	13	6	46	12	92	12	100	7	58	5	42	2 (m)	3 (n)
1981	2	1	50	0	0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1982	36	27	75	33	92	25	76	19	76	6	24	1 (o)	5 (p)
1983	3	3	100	0	0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1984	13	5	38	9	69	6	67	4	67	2	33	...	2 (q)
1985	2	1	50	1	50	1	100	1	100	...	...	...	...
1986	36	19	53	24	67	18	75	15	83	3	18	1 (r)	2 (s)
1987	3	3	100	2	67	1	50	...	...	1	100	1 (t)	...
1988	12	5	42	9	75	9	100	8	89	1	11	...	1 (u)
1989	2	2	100	0	0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1990	36	19 (v)	53	33	92	23	70	17	74	6	26	...	6 (w)
1991	3	2	67	2	67	2	100	...	...	2	100	1 (x)	1 (y)
1992	12	8	67	9	75	4	44	4	100	...	...	...	...
1993	2	0	0	1	50	1	100	0	0	1	100	...	1 (z)
1994	36	11 (aa)	31	30	83	23	77	17	74	6	26	2 (bb)	4 (cc)
1995	3	1	33	2	67	1	50	1	100	...	...	...	...
1996	11	7	36	9	82	7	78	7	100	...	...	...	...
1997	2	0	0	1	50	1	100	1	100	...	...	...	...
1998	36	11 (dd)	27	27	75	25	93	23	92	2	8	...	2 (ee)
1999	3	2	67	2	67	2	100	2	100	...	...	...	...
2000	11	8	73	7	88	6	86	5	83	1	17	...	1 (ff)
2001	2	2	100	0	0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
2002	36	14	39	22	61	16	73	12	75	4	25	...	4
Totals:													
Number	466	258		353		274		207		67		15	52
Percent	100	55.4		75.8		77.6		75.5		24.5		22.4	77.6

Source: Thad Beyle, using information from *The Book of the States, 1994-1995*, selected issues of *CQ Weekly Report*, 1970-present and *Campaign Insider*, 1999-2001. See <http://www.unc.edu/~beyle>.

- (a) Albert Brewer, D-Alabama.
- (b) Keith Miller, R-Alaska; Winthrop Rockefeller, R-Ark.; Claude Kirk, R-Fla.; Don Samuelson, R-Idaho; Norbert Tieman, R-Neb.; Dewey Bartlett, R-Okla.; Frank Rarrar, R-S.D.
- (c) Walter Peterson, R-N.H.; Preston Smith, D-Texas.
- (d) Russell Peterson, R-N.H.; Richard Ogilvie, R-Ill.
- (e) William Cahill, R-N.J.
- (f) One independent candidate won: James Longley of Maine.
- (g) David Hall, D-Okla.
- (h) John Vanderhoof, R-Colo.; Francis Sargent, R-Mass.; Malcolm Wilson, R-N.Y.; John Gilligan, D-Ohio.
- (i) Dan Walker, D-Ill.
- (j) Sherman Tribbitt, D-Del.; Christopher 'Kit' Bond, R-Mo.
- (k) Michael Dukakis, D-Mass.
- (l) Robert F. Bennett, R-Kan.; Rudolph G. Perpich, D-Minn.; Meldrim Thompson, R-N.H.; Robert Straub, D-Oreg.; Martin J. Schreiber, D-Wis.
- (m) Thomas L. Judge, D-Mont.; Dixy Lee Ray, D-Wash.
- (n) Bill Clinton, D-Ark.; Joseph P. Teasdale, D-Mo.; Arthur A. Link, D-N.D.
- (o) Edward J. King, D-Mass.
- (p) Frank D. White, R-Ark.; Charles Thone, R-Neb.; Robert F. List, R-

- Nev.; Hugh J. Gallen, D-N.H.; William P. Clements, R-Texas.
- (q) Allen I. Olson, R-N.D.; John D. Spellman, R-Wash.
- (r) Bill Sheffield, D-Alaska
- (s) Mark White, D-Texas; Anthony S. Earl, D-Wis.
- (t) Edwin Edwards, D-La.
- (u) Arch A. Moore, R-W. Va.
- (v) Two independent candidates won: Walter Hickel (Alaska) and Lowell Weiker (Conn.). Both were former statewide Republican office holders.
- (w) Bob Martinez, R-Fla.; Mike Hayden, R-Kan.; James Blanchard, D-Mich.; Rudy Perpich, DFL-Minn.; Kay Orr, R-Neb.; Edward DiPrete, R-R.I.
- (x) Buddy Roemer, R-La.
- (y) Ray Mabus, D-Miss.
- (z) James Florio, D-N.J.
- (aa) One independent candidate won: Angus King of Maine.
- (bb) Bruce Sundlun, D-R.I.; Walter Dean Miller, R-S.D.
- (cc) James E. Folsom, Jr., D-Ala.; Bruce King, D-N.M.; Mario Cuomo, D-N.Y.; Ann Richards, D-Texas.
- (dd) Two independent candidates won: Angus King of Maine and Jesse Ventura of Minnesota.
- (ee) Fob James, R-Ala.; David Beasley, R-S.C.
- (ff) Cecil Underwood, R-W. Va.
- (gg) Don Siegelman, D-Ala.; Roy Barnes, D-Ga.; Jim Hodges, D-S.C.; and Scott McCallum, R-Wis.

Between 1970 and 1992, Democrats won 200 of the 324 races for governor (62 percent). Then starting in 1993, and continuing on between 1994 (when Republicans won races up and down the ballots across the states) and 1998, Republicans won 57 of 90 races (63 percent). Between 1999 and 2001, Democrats moved back into the lead by winning 12 of the 16 races (75 percent). Democratic candidates even won eight of the 11 races in 2000, when Gov. Bush won the presidency in a very close race. In 2002, the Republicans regained the mid-1990s momentum by winning 22 of the 36 races (61 percent). So, over the past 10 years of gubernatorial elections, the Republicans held a 95-to-59 winning advantage (62 percent). Despite this partisan shifting, in 2003 there is only a narrow margin of 26 Republicans to 24 Democrats in the governors' chairs.

Another factor in determining how many governors have served in the states is how many of the newly elected governors are truly new to the office, and how many are returning after complying with constitutional term limits or holding other positions. Looking at the number of actual new governors taking office over a decade, the average number of new governors elected in the states dropped from 2.3 new governors per state in the 1950s to 1.9 in the 1970s and 1.1 in the 1980s. In the 1990s, the rate began to move up a bit to 1.4 new governors per state.

And now as we enter the first decade of the 21st century, we find that new governors were elected in 32 of the 49 elections (65 percent) in 2000, 2001 and 2002, so these states are starting the century with new leadership at the top. Adding in the one new governor elected in 1999, we find that in 2003, 33 states have governors serving in their first term. The years around the turn of the 21st century have certainly proved to be a time of change in the governor's offices across the 50 states.

The New Governors

From 1998-2002, the 46 newly elected governors took several different routes to the governor's chair. Fifteen new governors had previously held statewide office. These included: five lieutenant governors — Don Siegelman (D-Ala.), Gray Davis (D-Calif.), Ruth Ann Minner (D-Del.), Ronnie Musgrove (D-Miss.) and Judy Martz (R-Mont.); five attorneys general — Janet Napolitano (D-Ariz.), Jennifer Granholm (D-Mich.), Mike Easley, (D-N.C.), Bob Taft (R-Ohio) and Jim Doyle (D-Wis.); three state treasurers — Bill Owens (R-Colo.), Bob Holden (D-Mo.) and James Douglass (R-Vt.); one secretary of state — George

Ryan (R-Ill.) and one state insurance commissioner, Kathleen Sebelius (D-Kan.).

Nine of the new governors were members or former members of Congress who returned to work in the state. These included U.S. Senators Frank Murkowski (R-Alaska) and Dirk Kempthorne (R-Idaho) and U.S. Congressmen Bob Riley (R-Ala.), Rod Blagojevich (D-Ill.), John Baldacci (D-Maine), Robert Ehrlich (R-Md.), Mark Sanford (R-S.C.) and Bob Wise (D-W.Va.). Former U.S. Congressman Bill Richardson (D-N.M.) had also served as an administrator in the Clinton administration.

Seven legislators or former legislators moved up from a district to a statewide office. These included Roy Barnes (D-from the Georgia House) followed by Sonny Perdue (R- from the Georgia Senate), Tom Vilsack (D-from the Iowa Senate), Tim Pawlenty (R-from the Minnesota House), Brad Henry (D-from the Oklahoma Senate), Jim Hodges (D-from the South Carolina House) and Mike Rounds (R-from the South Dakota Senate).

Six new governors were from the business sector: Jeb Bush (R-Fla.), Kenny Guinn (R-Nev.), Craig Benson (R-N.H.), John Hoeven (R-N.D.), Don Carcieri (R-R.I.), and Mark Warner (D-Va.).

Another six were mayors or former mayors. These included Linda Lingle (R-Maui, Hawaii), Jesse Ventura (Ref.-Brooklyn Park, Minn.), Mike Johanns, (R-Lincoln, Neb.), Jim McGreevey (D-Woodbridge, N.J.), Ed Rendell (D-Philadelphia, Pa.) and Phil Bredesen (D-Nashville, Tenn.).

Finally, three new governors followed a unique path compared to their counterparts: former 2000 Winter Olympics Chairman Mitt Romney (R-Massachusetts), former State Supreme Court Justice Ted Kulongoski (D-Ore.) and former U.S. Attorney Dave Freudenthal (D-Wyo.).

In the 356 gubernatorial races between 1977 and 2002, among the candidates there were 96 lieutenant governors (26 won), 80 attorneys general (20 won), 24 secretaries of state (five won), 22 state treasurers (six won) and 13 state auditors, auditors general or comptrollers (three won). Looking at these numbers from a bettor's point of view, the odds of a lieutenant governor winning were 3.7-to-1, an attorney general 4-to-1, a secretary of state 4.8-to-1, a state treasurer 3.7-to-1 and a state auditor 4.3-to-1.

Timing of Gubernatorial Elections

The election cycle for governors has settled into a regular pattern. Over the past few decades, many states have moved their elections to the off-presiden-

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**Table B: Total Cost of Gubernatorial Elections: 1977-2002
(in thousands of dollars)**

Year	Number of races	Total campaign costs		Average cost per state (2002\$)	Percent change in similar elections (b)
		Actual \$	2002\$ (a)		
1977	2	12,312	36,535,261	18,267,630	N.A.
1978	36	99,981	276,190,608	7,671,961	N.A. (c)
1979	3	32,744	81,048,700	27,016,233	N.A.
1980	13	35,623	77,778,451	5,982,958	N.A.
1981	2	24,648	48,808,255	24,404,128	+34
1982	36	181,306	338,257,371	9,396,038	+22 (d)
1983	3	39,966	72,140,362	24,046,787	-11
1984	13	47,156	81,584,382	6,275,722	+5
1985	2	18,859	31,536,030	15,768,015	-35
1986	36	270,383	443,979,389	12,332,761	+31
1987	3	40,212	63,727,095	21,242,365	-12
1988	12 (e)	52,161	79,271,844	6,605,987	-3
1989	2	47,902	69,524,328	34,762,164	+120
1990	36	345,551	475,311,420	13,203,095	+7
1991	3	34,612	45,723,217	15,241,072	-28
1992	12	60,268	77,266,962	6,438,914	-3
1993	2	35,966	44,789,849	22,394,925	-36
1994	36	417,849	507,098,216	14,086,062	+7
1995	3	35,692	42,139,807	14,046,602	-8
1996	11 (f)	68,603	80,050,557	7,277,323	+4
1997	2	44,823	49,969,824	24,984,912	+12
1998	36	539,969	592,721,695	16,464,492	+17
1999	3	16,276	17,576,338	5,858,779	-58
2000	11	97,097	101,460,129	9,223,648	+27
2001	2	70,400	71,544,898	35,772,449	+43
2002	36	833,364,490	833,364,490	23,149,014	+41

Source: Thad Beyle.

(a) Developed from the Table, "Historical Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. Each year's actual expenditures are converted to the 2002\$ value of the dollar to control for the effect of inflation over the period.

(b) This represents the percent increase or decrease in 2002\$ over the last bank of similar elections, i.e., 1977 v. 1981, 1978 v. 1982, 1979 v. 1983, etc.

(c) The data for 1978 are a particular problem as the two sources compiling data on this year's elections did so in differing ways that excluded some candidates. The result is that the numbers for 1978 under-represent

the actual costs of these elections by some unknown amount. The sources are: Rhodes Cook and Stacy West, "1978 Advantage," *CQ Weekly Report*, (1979): 1757-1758, and *The Great Louisiana Spendathon* (Baton Rouge: Public Affairs Research Council, March 1980).

(d) This particular comparison with 1978 is not what it would appear to be for the reasons given in note (c).

(e) As of the 1986 election, Arkansas switched to a four-year term for the governor, hence the drop from 13 to 12 for this off-year.

(f) As of the 1995 election, Rhode Island switched to a four-year term for the governor, hence the drop from 12 to 11 for this off-year.

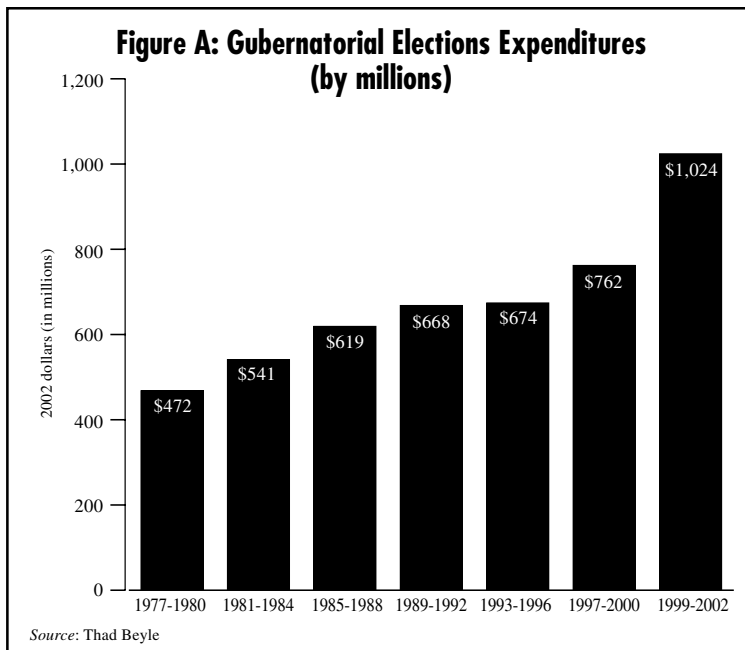
tial years in order to decouple the state and national level campaigns. Now only 11 states hold their gubernatorial elections in the same year as a presidential election. Two of those states – New Hampshire and Vermont – still have two-year terms for their governors so their elections alternate between presidential and non-presidential years.

As can be seen in Table A, the year following a presidential election has only two states with gubernatorial elections.⁵ Then in the even year between presidential elections, 36 states hold their gubernatorial elections, and in the year just before a presidential election, three Southern states hold their gubernatorial elections.⁶

Cost of Gubernatorial Elections

Table C presents data on the costs of the most recent gubernatorial elections. There is a great range in how much these races cost, from the all-time most expensive race recorded in New York in 2002 (\$146.8 million) to the low-cost 1998 race in Wyoming (\$800,000 in 2002 dollars). Both the New York and the Wyoming races saw an incumbent successfully win re-election.

But if we look at how much was spent by all the candidates per general-election vote, a slightly different picture evolves. In 2002, the New Hampshire governor's race was the most expensive at \$42.77



per vote, followed by New York at \$31.28 per vote, South Dakota at \$29.01 per vote, South Carolina at \$26.92 per vote, Hawaii at \$24.76 per vote, Alaska at \$23.56 per vote, Texas at \$23.18 per vote, Rhode Island at \$20.87 per vote and New Mexico at \$20.70 per vote. The New Hampshire, South Dakota, Hawaii, Alaska, Rhode Island and New Mexico races were for open seats. In New York, an incumbent successfully won re-election, while in Texas, an “accidental governor” won the office in his own right. The South Carolina race saw an incumbent defeated in his bid for re-election.

In Figure A, by converting the actual dollars spent each year into the equivalent 2002 dollars, we show how the cost of these elections has increased over time. Since 1981, we have been able to compare the costs of each 4-year cycle of elections with the previous cycle of elections.

In the 54 elections held between 1977 and 1980, the total expenditures were \$471.6 million. In the 52 elections held between 1999 and 2002 — just over two decades later — the total expenditures were over \$1,023.9 million, an increase of 117 percent. The greatest increases in expenditures were between the 1977-1980 and the 1987-1990 cycles, when there was a 45.9 percent increase, and between the 1994-1997 and the 1999-2002 cycles when there was a 50.7 percent increase.

These increases reflect the new style of campaign-

ing for governor — with the candidates developing their own personal party by using outside consultants, opinion polls, media ads and buys, and extensive fundraising efforts to pay for all of this. This style has now reached into most every state. Few states will be surprised by a high-price, high-tech campaign; they are commonplace now. The “air-war” campaigns have replaced the “ground-war” campaigns across the states.

Another factor has been the increasing number of candidates who are either wealthy or who have access to wealth and are willing to spend some of this money to become governor. For some, spending a lot of

money leads to winning the governor’s chair. In 2002, Gov. Gray Davis spent \$64.2 million in his successful bid for reelection in California, while Gov. George Pataki spent \$44.2 million to win his third term.

But spending a lot doesn’t always lead to a win. For example, in the 2002 New York election, Thomas Golisano spent \$76.3 million in his unsuccessful campaign for governor as an Independent candidate. And in Texas, Tony Sanchez also spent \$76.3 million as the unsuccessful Democratic candidate. In California’s 1998 gubernatorial election, three candidates spent more than \$34 million each in 2002 dollars in their campaigns.⁷ Two of these candidates won their party’s nomination and faced off in November, with Gray Davis (D) the winner. The largest spender at \$42.7 million, Al Checchi (D), wasn’t even able to win the Democratic nomination.

Gubernatorial Powers

One way to view the changes that have been occurring in gubernatorial powers is to look at the “Index of Formal Powers of the Governorship” first developed by Joseph Schlesinger in the 1960s,⁸ which this author has continued to update.⁹ The index used here consists of six different indices of gubernatorial power as seen in 1960 and 2003. These indices include the number and importance of separately elected executive branch officials, the tenure potential of governors, the appointment powers of governors

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Table C: Cost of gubernatorial campaigns, most recent elections

State	Year	Winner	Point margin	Total campaign expenditures				
				All candidates (2002\$)	Cost per vote (2002\$)	Winner		
						Spent (2002\$)	Percent of all expenditures	Vote percent
Alabama	2002	R★★★	+0.3	\$25,237,092	18.46	\$13,847,976	54.9	49.2
Alaska	2002	R#	+15	5,343,055	23.56	1,729,118	32.4	56.0
Arizona	2002	D#	+1	7,616,103	5.62	2,297,981	30.1	46.0
Arkansas	2002	R★	+6	4,526,103	5.62	2,730,257	60.3	53.0
California	2002	D★	+4.9	109,568,638	14.66	64,215,205	58.6	47.3
Colorado	2002	R★	+29	5,899,050	4.29	6,053,779	81.7	79.6
Connecticut	2002	R★	+12	7,869,235	7.69	6,117,067	77.7	56.0
Delaware	2000	D#	+19	3,229,432	9.98	1,393,763	43.2	59.0
Florida	2002	R#	+13	17,159,567	3.36	7,624,866	44.4	56.0
Georgia	2002	R★★★	+5	24,258,672	11.96	3,655,202	15.1	51.0
Hawaii	2002	R#	+4	9,459,227	24.76	5,408,527	57.2	51.1
Idaho	2002	R★	+14	2,236,502	5.44	1,113,300	49.8	56.0
Illinois	2002	D#	+8	48,765,753	13.78	22,409,565	46.0	53.0
Indiana	2000	D★	+14	18,808,082	8.63	10,060,371	53.5	57.0
Iowa	2002	D★	+8	13,149,081	12.82	6,051,598	46.0	52.7
Kansas	2002	D#	+8	15,261,932	18.26	4,362,442	28.6	52.9
Kentucky	1999	D★	+39	1,466,544	2.54	1,391,158	94.9	61.0
Louisiana	1999	R★	+32	7,288,453	5.63	3,874,621	53.2	62.0
Maine	2002	D#	+5	4,329,124	8.57	1,584,380	36.6	47.0
Maryland	2002	R#	+4	5,136,295	3.01	2,533,835	49.3	51.6
Massachusetts	2002	R#	+5	30,601,910	13.78	9,361,003	30.6	49.8
Michigan	2002	D★★★	+4	14,451,859	4.55	8,888,296	61.5	51.4
Minnesota	2002	R#	+8	5,966,791	2.65	2,525,770	42.3	44.4
Mississippi	1999	D#	+1	8,955,220	11.72	2,994,731	33.4	49.6
Missouri	2000	D#	+1	19,510,708	8.55	10,387,742	53.2	50.5
Montana	2000	R#	+4	4,800,777	11.70	1,004,983	20.9	51.0
Nebraska	2002	R★	+41	1,598,973	3.32	1,213,154	75.9	68.7
Nevada	2002	R★	+46	2,716,694	5.39	2,644,033	97.3	68.0
New Hampshire	2002	R#	+21	18,947,338	42.77	11,164,368	58.9	59.0
New Jersey	2001	D#	+15	37,433,615	16.81	15,574,378	41.6	56.0
New Mexico	2002	D#	+15	10,022,242	20.70	7,326,497	73.1	55.0
New York	2002	R★	+16	146,751,564	31.28	44,189,099	30.1	48.2
North Carolina	2000	D#	+6	29,373,751	9.98	11,479,197	39.1	52.0
North Dakota	2000	R#	+10	2,405,943	8.29	1,170,644	48.7	55.0
Ohio	2002	R★	+20	14,471,842	4.48	12,833,724	88.7	58.0
Oklahoma	2002	D#	+0.7	11,221,349	10.84	3,231,710	28.8	43.3
Oregon	2002	D#	+2.8	15,110,672	11.99	4,167,597	27.6	49.0
Pennsylvania	2002	D#	+9	65,140,807	18.19	39,163,561	60.1	53.0
Rhode Island	2002	R#	+10	6,923,727	20.87	2,441,691	35.3	55.0
South Carolina	2002	R★★★	+6	29,608,998	26.92	7,157,106	24.2	53.0
South Dakota	2002	R#	+15	9,706,378	29.01	1,624,148	16.7	56.8
Tennessee	2002	D#	+3	17,196,285	10.40	9,763,343	56.8	50.6
Texas	2002	R★	+18	105,566,033	23.18	27,899,725	26.4	57.8
Utah	2000	R★	+14	2,269,594	2.98	2,030,557	89.5	56.0
Vermont	2002	R#	+2.5	2,119,564	9.22	1,124,519	53.1	44.9
Virginia	2001	D#	+5	34,623,887	18.35	20,452,302	59.1	52.0
Washington	2000	D★	+19	6,837,941	2.77	3,941,168	57.6	58.0
West Virginia	2000	D★★★	+3	6,797,779	10.49	2,931,945	43.1	50.1
Wisconsin	2002	D★★★	+3.7	17,104,862	9.63	5,526,312	32.3	45.1
Wyoming	2002	D#	+2.1	2,166,087	11.68	748,226	34.5	50.0

Source: Thad Beyle.

Key:

D — Democrat

I — Independent

R — Republican

★ — Incumbent ran and won.

★★ — Incumbent ran and lost in party primary.

★★★ — Incumbent ran and lost in general election.

— Open seat.

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for administrative and board positions in the executive branch, the governor’s budgetary power, the governor’s veto power and the governor’s party control in the legislature. Each of the individual indices is set in a five-point scale, with five being the most power and one being the least. (See Table D for details on how each of these indices and the overall index were developed).

During the four-plus decades between 1960 and 2003, the overall institutional powers of the nation’s governors increased by 12.5 percent. The greatest increase among the individual gubernatorial powers was in their veto power (plus 61 percent) as more governors gained an item veto, and in 1996 North Carolina voters were finally able to vote on a constitutional amendment giving their governor veto power. It was approved by a 3-to-1 ratio.

The indices measuring the governor’s tenure potential (length of term and ability to seek an additional term or terms) and the number of separately elected executive branch officials showed identical 28 percent increases in favor of the governor. The governors’ appointment power over specific functional area executive branch officials increased by only 7 percent. In addition, the states continue to hold to the concept of the multiple executive in terms of how many statewide elected officials there are. In 2000, there were 305 separately elected executive branch officials covering 12 major offices in the states.¹⁰ This compares to 306 elected officials in 1972. Ten states also have multimember boards, commissions or councils with members selected by statewide or district elections.

The gubernatorial budgetary power actually declined over the period (minus 14 percent). However, we must remember that during this same period, state legislatures were also undergoing considerable reform, and gaining more power to work on the governor’s proposed budget was one of those reforms sought. Hence, the increased legislative powers more than balanced out those decreases in gubernatorial budgetary power.

There has also been a drop in the gubernatorial party control in the state legislature over the period (minus 17 percent). Much of this can be attributed to the major partisan shifts occurring in the Southern states as the region has been moving from one-party dominance to a very competitive two-party system.¹¹ In 1960, 13 of the 14 governors were Democrats, and all 28 state legislative chambers were under Democratic control. In 2003, each party controls seven governorships, while the Democrats hold a 17-to-11 edge in control of the legislative chambers. Four

Table D: Governors’ Institutional Powers, 1960 v. 2003

Specific power	Scores		Percent change
	1960	2003	
Separately elected executive branch officials (SEP)	2.3	2.9	28%
Tenure potential (TP)	3.2	4.1	28
Appointment powers (AP)	2.9	3.1	7
Budget power (BP)	3.6	3.1	-14
Veto power (VP)	2.8	4.5	61
Gubernatorial party control (PC)	3.6	3.0	-17
Totals	18.4	20.7	12.5

Notes:

SEP — Separately elected executive branch officials: 5 = only governor or governor/lieutenant governor team elected; 4.5 = governor or governor/lieutenant governor team, with one other elected official; 4 = governor/lieutenant governor team with some process officials (attorney general, secretary of state, treasurer, auditor) elected; 3 = governor/lieutenant governor team with process officials, and some major and minor policy officials elected; 2.5 = governor (no team) with six or fewer officials elected, but none are major policy officials; 2 = governor (no team) with six or fewer officials elected, including one major policy official; 1.5 = governor (no team) with six or fewer officials elected, but two are major policy officials; 1 = governor (no team) with seven or more process and several major policy officials elected. [Source: CSG, *The Book of the States, 1960-1961* (1960): 124-125 and 2002 (2002): 163-168].

TP — Tenure potential of governors: 5 = 4-year term, no restraint on reelection; 4.5 = 4-year term, only three terms permitted; 4 = 4-year term, only two terms permitted; 3 = 4-year term, no consecutive election permitted; 2 = 2-year term, no restraint on reelection; 1 = 2-year term, only two terms permitted. [Source: Joseph A. Schlesinger, “The Politics of the Executive,” in *Politics in the American States*, edited by Herbert Jacob and Kenneth N. Vines (Boston: Little, Brown, 1965) and CSG, *The Book of the States, 2002* (2002): 145-146].

AP — Governor’s appointment powers in six major functional areas: corrections, K-12 education, health, highways/transportation, public utilities regulation, and welfare. The six individual office scores are totaled and then averaged and rounded to the nearest .5 for the state score. 5 = governor appoints, no other approval needed; 4 = governor appoints, a board, council or legislature approves; 3 = someone else appoints, governor approves or shares appointment; 2 = someone else appoints, governor and others approve; 1 = someone else appoints, no approval or confirmation needed. [Source: Schlesinger (1965), and CSG, *The Book of the States, 2002* (2002): 163-168].

BP — Governor’s budget power: 5 = governor has full responsibility, legislature may not increase executive budget; 4 = governor has full responsibility, legislature can increase by special majority vote or subject to item veto; 3 = governor has full responsibility, legislature has unlimited power to change executive budget; 2 = governor shares responsibility, legislature has unlimited power to change executive budget; 1 = governor shares responsibility with other elected official, legislature has unlimited power to change executive budget. [Source: Schlesinger (1965) and CSG, *The Book of the States, 2002* (2002): 150-151 and NCSL, “Limits on Authority of Legislature to Change Budget” (1998)].

VP — Governor’s veto power: 5 = has item veto and a special majority vote of the legislature is needed to override a veto (3/5’s of legislators elected or 2/3’s of legislators present; 4 = has item veto with a majority of the legislators elected needed to override; 3 = has item veto with only a majority of the legislators present needed to override; 2 = no item veto, with a special legislative majority needed to override it; 1 = no item veto, only a simple legislative majority needed to override. (Source: Schlesinger (1965), and CSG, *The Book of the States, 2002* (2002): 160-151).

PC — Gubernatorial party control: 5 = has a substantial majority (75% or more) in both houses of the legislature; 4 = has a simple majority in both houses (less than 75%), or a substantial majority in one house and a simple majority in the other; 3 = split party control in the legislature or a nonpartisan legislature; 2 = has a substantial minority in both houses (25% or more), or a simple minority (25% or less) in one and a substantial minority in the other; 1 = has a simple minority in both houses. (Source: National Conference of State Legislatures, various dates).

Total — sum of the scores on the six individual indices.

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Southern governors face a legislature completely controlled by the opposite party, while three others face a legislature with split partisan control.

Notes

¹ The former governors winning the presidency over the past three decades were Ronald Reagan (R-Calif., 1967-1975), Jimmy Carter (D-Ga., 1971-1975), Bill Clinton (D-Ark., 1979-1981 and 1983-1992) and George W. Bush (R-Texas, 1995-2001).

² For an analysis of governors trying to handle the impact of the early 1990s economic downturn, see Thad Beyle, ed., *Governors in Hard Times* (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 1994).

³ For a tough, critical view on this change see Jonathan Chait, "What Ever Happened to the GOP Governors?" *The New Republic* (January 14, 2002).

⁴ For more detail on this see Beyle, "The 2002 Gubernatorial Elections," *Spectrum* (Winter 2003).

⁵ New Jersey and Virginia.

⁶ Kentucky, Louisiana and Mississippi.

⁷ These candidates were Al Checchi (D) (\$42.7 million in 2002 dollars), Gray Davis (D) (\$41.3 million) and Dan Lundgren (R) (\$34.6 million). One other candidate, Jane Harman (D), also spent \$18 million in the race.

⁸ Joseph A. Schlesinger, "The Politics of the Executive,"

Politics in the American States, 1st and 2nd ed., Herbert Jacob and Kenneth N. Vines, eds., (Boston: Little Brown, 1965 and 1971).

⁹ Thad L. Beyle, "The Governors," *Politics in the American States*, 7th ed., Virginia Gray, Russell L. Hanson and Herbert Jacob, eds., (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 1999). Earlier versions of this index by the author appeared in the 4th edition (1983), the 5th edition (1990) and the 6th edition (1996).

¹⁰ Kendra Hovey and Harold Hovey, "D-12 - Number of Statewide Elected Officials, 2000," *CQ's State Fact Finder, 2003* (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2003): 107.

¹¹ The following states are included in this definition of the South: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia.

About the Author

Thad Beyle is Pearsall Professor of Political Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. A Syracuse University AB and AM, he received his Ph.D. at the University of Illinois. He spent a year in the North Carolina governor's office in the mid-1960s and has worked with the National Governors Association in several capacities on gubernatorial transitions.