

THE FILLING OF VACANCIES IN THE WISCONSIN REPRESENTATION
IN THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS
ON THOSE VACANCIES CAUSED BY THE DEATH OF THE INCUMBENT

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Wisconsin Statutory Provision

Section 17.18 of the statutes, as renumbered and amended by ch. 647, laws of 1957, says "Vacancies in the office of member of congress from this state shall be filled by election, as provided in s. 7.01 for the residue of the unexpired term." Section 7.01 (2), as amended by that act, says "A vacancy in the office of representative in the congress of the United States, occurring not more than 4 months nor less than 40 days before a general election, shall be filled at such election. Any such vacancy occurring more than 4 months or less than 40 days before a general election may be filled at a special election and if not so filled shall be filled at the next subsequent general election. Chapter 647, laws of 1957, changed the method of filling a vacancy in the office of U.S. Senator from Wisconsin.

List of Vacancies by District

The following compilation lists the members of the U.S. House of Representatives from Wisconsin who died in office and their successors where the post was filled for the unexpired term. The list is by district.

First District

Henry A. Cooper died March 1, 1931. Succeeded by Thomas R. Amlie who was elected to fill the unexpired term at a special election held October 13, 1931. The primary was held October 3, 1931.

Stephen Bolles died July 8, 1941. Succeeded by Lawrence H. Smith who was elected to fill the unexpired term at a special election held August 29, 1941. The primary was held August 8, 1941.

Lawrence H. Smith died January 22, 1958.

Second District

Luther Hanchett died November 24, 1862. Succeeded by W. D. McIndoe who was elected to fill the unexpired term at a special election held December 30, 1862. There was no primary at that time.

Benjamin F. Hopkins died January 1, 1870. Succeeded by David Atwood who was elected at a special election held February 15, 1870. Took office February 23, 1870.

Henry C. Adams died July 9, 1906. Succeeded by John M. Nelson who was elected September 4, 1906 at a special election to fill the vacancy.

Robert K. Henry died November 20, 1946. Succeeded by Glenn R. Davis who was elected at a special election held April 22, 1947. The primary was held April 1, 1947.

Third District

Harry W. Griswold died July 4, 1939. The unexpired term was not filled. William H. Stevenson was elected at the regular election for the next congress.

Fourth District

None died in office but John L. Mitchell resigned on February 10 or March 3, 1893 to become U.S. Senator and an election to fill the post was held April 4, 1893 at which Peter Somers won. This was the regular spring election date.

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Fifth District

Joseph Rankin died in office January 24, 1886. Succeeded by Thomas R. Hudd who was elected February 3, 1886 to fill the post. He took office March 8, 1886.

Although Victor Berger did not die in office, his election on November 4, 1919 resulted in an action by the House of Representatives on November 10, 1919, refusing to seat him. On November 11, 1919 the Governor issued an election call to fill the vacancy. The election was held on December 19, 1919 and Berger beat Henry H. Bodenstab. But Berger was never seated, and neither Carney, his original opponent, nor Bodenstab were successful in claiming that as second highest candidates, they were elected when Berger was refused a seat.

Sixth District

James H. Davidson died August 6, 1918. Succeeded by Florian Lampert who was elected November 5, 1918 at the regular general election to fill the term ending March 1919 and simultaneously elected for the next full term.

Florian Lampert died July 18, 1930 while in office. Succeeded by Michael K. Reilly who was elected in November 1930 to fill both the unexpired term and the full term.

Seventh District

George B. Shaw died August 27, 1894. Succeeded by Michael Griffin who was elected November 6, 1894 at the regular general election to fill the unexpired term and was simultaneously elected for the next full term.

Reid F. Murray died April 28, 1952. No successor was elected to fill the term, and Melvin R. Laird ran for the new term only.

Note: Since the adoption of the 20th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution moving the date of convening of the new Congress to January 3 instead of March, the need for an election to fill an unexpired term created late in the even year is eliminated. See first entry under Eighth District for illustration of situation which could not occur today.

Eighth District

William T. Price died in office December 6, 1886. Succeeded by his son, Hugh H. Price, who was elected January 18, 1887 and served from that day until March 3 only.

Ninth District

Merlin Hull died May 17, 1953. He was succeeded by Lester R. Johnson who was elected at a special election on October 13, 1953 to fill the vacancy.

Tenth District

None

Eleventh District (Existed from 1903 to 1933 only)

No deaths but Irvine L. Lenroot resigned April 17, 1918 when he was elected U.S. Senator. At the regular general election on November 5, 1918 Adolphus P. Nelson was elected to fill the unexpired term as well as the full term.