

PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION AND THE VICE PRESIDENCY

TEXT SUMMARY

The plan by which a vacancy in the office of President gets filled is **presidential succession**. The 25th Amendment says that the Vice President will become President if the President dies, resigns, or is removed from office. If the Vice President is unable to serve, the **Presidential Succession Act of 1947** says the Speaker of the House and the Senate's president *pro tempore* are the next officers in line.

The 25th Amendment also outlines what happens if the President becomes disabled. The

a majority of the Cabinet disagree, Congress must decide if the disability still exists.

Other than helping to decide about presidential disability, the Constitution assigns the Vice President only one role: presiding over the Senate. Political parties usually pick a candidate for Vice President who will **balance the ticket**, or help the presidential candidate appeal to a broader range of voters.

If the office of Vice President becomes vacant, the President chooses a replacement who must then be confirmed by a majority vote in both houses.

THE BIG IDEA

If the President dies, resigns, or is removed from office, the Vice President succeeds to the presidency.

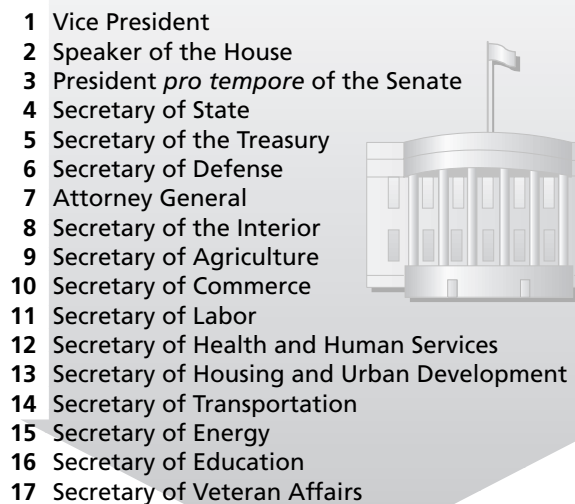
Vice President becomes Acting President if the President tells Congress he cannot do his job or if the Vice President and a majority of the Cabinet tell Congress that the President is disabled.

The President may return to his duties when he thinks he is ready. If the Vice President and

There is a specific line of succession to the presidency so that the office will never be vacant.

GRAPHIC SUMMARY: Presidential Succession

Order of Presidential Succession

- 1 Vice President
 - 2 Speaker of the House
 - 3 President *pro tempore* of the Senate
 - 4 Secretary of State
 - 5 Secretary of the Treasury
 - 6 Secretary of Defense
 - 7 Attorney General
 - 8 Secretary of the Interior
 - 9 Secretary of Agriculture
 - 10 Secretary of Commerce
 - 11 Secretary of Labor
 - 12 Secretary of Health and Human Services
 - 13 Secretary of Housing and Urban Development
 - 14 Secretary of Transportation
 - 15 Secretary of Energy
 - 16 Secretary of Education
 - 17 Secretary of Veteran Affairs
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REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Who may decide that the President is disabled?
2. **Chart Skills** Who becomes President if the President and Vice President are removed from office?