

Historical Highlights of the House



Speaker of the House Facts

Prepared and Updated by
The Pennsylvania House of Representatives Archives

- First Speaker of the House:** The minutes of the first Assembly meeting in 1682 do not name who presided as Speaker. Thomas Wynne was elected Speaker for the second session of the Assembly that convened in 1683.
- Total number of Speakers:** One hundred and forty Speakers of the Pennsylvania House can be identified. In addition to the vague minutes of the first Session, the minutes of 1691 have been lost or destroyed.
- Longest serving Speaker of the House:** Isaac Norris II was elected Speaker for 15 one-year Sessions (1750-1757, 1758-1764)
- Shortest tenure as Speaker:** James Findley was elected Speaker of the House on December 3, 1833 and resigned the position just days later when he was appointed Secretary of the Commonwealth. He assumed that position on December 17, 1833.
- County with the most Speakers:** Forty-two Philadelphia County Representatives have served as Speaker.
- Speakers who served as Governor:** Thomas Mifflin (1790-1799), Simon Snyder (1808-1817), Joseph Ritner (1835-1839), and William F. Packer (1858-1861) all served as Pennsylvania's Governor.
- Youngest known Speaker elected:** Ezra B. Chase, William C.A. Lawrence, and James R. Kelley were all just 26 years old when they were elected Speaker. Chase was officially the youngest — being elected Speaker just 8 days after his 26th birthday.
- Oldest known Speaker elected:** Hiram G. Andrews was elected Speaker at the age of 79.
- Speaker of the Pennsylvania House and Speaker of United States House of Representatives:** Frederick A.C. Muhlenberg has the distinction of being elected both Speaker of the Pennsylvania General Assembly (1780-1783), as well as Speaker of the First Federal Congress on April 1, 1789.
- Number of Speakers to die in office:** Five: John Kinsey (May 11, 1750), William C.A. Lawrence (April 21, 1860), John Cessna (December 13, 1893), James J. Manderino (December 26, 1989), and Matthew J. Ryan (March 29, 2003).
- Speaker when electronic voting machines were installed on House Floor** Hiram G. Andrews was Speaker when electronic voting machines were installed for the 1961 Session.