



Filling Jay Inslee's vacancy – special election in the 1st Congressional District

Why is the 1st Congressional seat vacant?

Congressman Jay Inslee resigned effective March 20, 2012. He is running for Governor.

Can the Governor appoint someone to serve until the next election?

No. The U.S. Constitution allows the Governor to appoint a successor for a vacancy in the U.S. Senate, but not in the U.S. House.

How will the position be filled?

There will be a special primary and special election to fill the vacancy. [State law](#) requires that the special primary and special election coincide with the 2012 regular Primary and General Election. The Primary will be August 7, 2012, and the General Election will be November 6, 2012.

Which candidates will qualify for the General Election?

The election will be conducted under Washington's Top Two Primary election system. The two candidates who receive the most votes in the August Primary will advance to the November General Election.

How long will the person serve?

The winner of the November General Election will serve until the beginning of the next full term, which begins January 3, 2013. This short period of time from a General election until the end of the current term is called a "short term." The two-year term that begins January 3, 2013 is called a "full term."

Will the special election for the short term be the same race on the ballot as the election for the full term?

No. Redistricting changed the geographic shape of all the congressional districts. However, the U.S. House of Representatives does not recognize the new Congressional boundaries until the next term begins, in January 2013. Consequently, the special election to fill the remainder of the current term must be conducted using the ["old" boundaries](#) of the 1st Congressional district while the election for the full two-year term must be conducted using the ["new" boundaries](#) of the 1st Congressional district. These will be treated as two separate races throughout the election.

If the boundaries of the district were unchanged, the election for the short term and the election for the full term could be combined into one race. This is how vacancy elections are usually handled in Washington.

Will some voters have two Congressional races on their ballot?

Yes. Voters who live in the “old” 1st Congressional district will be eligible to vote in both:

- The special election to fill out the remainder of the current term, and
- The regular election for the 2-year term that begins January 3, 2013.

A .pdf map of the “new” Congressional district boundaries is available [here](#).

An interactive map of the new congressional and legislative boundaries is available [here](#).

Can candidates file for both the short term and the full term?

Yes. Because the short term is a temporary elected position, a candidate can file for both the short term and the full term. This will require two Declarations of Candidacy, two \$1,740 filing fees, two filings with the Federal Election Commission, etc. More information about filing for office is available [here](#).

Candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives must be residents of the *State* but are not required to be residents of the specific congressional district.

However, candidates are not required to file for both races. Some candidates may decide to file for just one or both.

Why don't we just not fill the vacancy?

Both the U.S. Constitution and [state law](#) require that the State hold a special election. The U.S. Constitution specifically states, “When vacancies happen in the Representation from any State, the Executive Authority thereof shall issue Writs of Election to fill such Vacancies.”