

Indiana Republicans Pick Mike Pence's Replacement

Indiana Gov. Mike Pence was facing a stiff test in the November election as he faced re-election, but now that he's been tapped as Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump's running mate, that fight has been handed over to another candidate.

That candidate will be Lt. Gov. Eric Holcomb, following a vote by the state's Republican Central Committee on Tuesday afternoon.

Holcomb just became lieutenant governor in March when his predecessor, Sue Ellspermann, resigned to become president of a college. Prior to accepting Pence's appointment, Holcomb served as an adviser to then-Gov. Mitch Daniels, as chairman of the Indiana Republican Party, and as chief of staff to U.S. Sen. Dan Coats (R-Ind.).

Holcomb had previously announced he intended to run for his boss' Senate seat when Coats announced in 2015 he would not seek re-election. He dropped that bid a few days before he was appointed lieutenant governor.

It is expected that Holcomb will do well in the November election, despite his lack of experience as an elected official. He's highly regarded by most Republicans and is well connected with all of the various factions within the party.

Pence was forced to remove himself from the race due to a state law that prohibits a candidate from appearing twice on the same ballot. Holcomb will face Pence's 2012 foe, former Indiana Speaker of the House John Gregg (D-Sandborn), whom Pence beat by 3.2 percentage points.

During Tuesday's central committee meeting, other candidates

considered were U.S. Reps. Susan Brooks and Todd Rokita, and state Sen. Jim Tomes. Late last week, however, Pence endorsed Holcomb as his replacement.