

Options for the Governors' Portraits  
November 2, 2015



*Prepared for the Art at the Minnesota Capitol Subcommittee of the Minnesota Capitol Preservation Commission  
by Committee Member Peter Hilger, AIA- Nov 2, 2015.*

How Ten State Capitols'  
Display of Governors'  
Portraits

Pennsylvania State Capitol

Colorado State Capitol

Kentucky State Capitol

Missouri State Capitol

Indiana State Capitol

West Virginia State Capitol

Kansas State Capitol

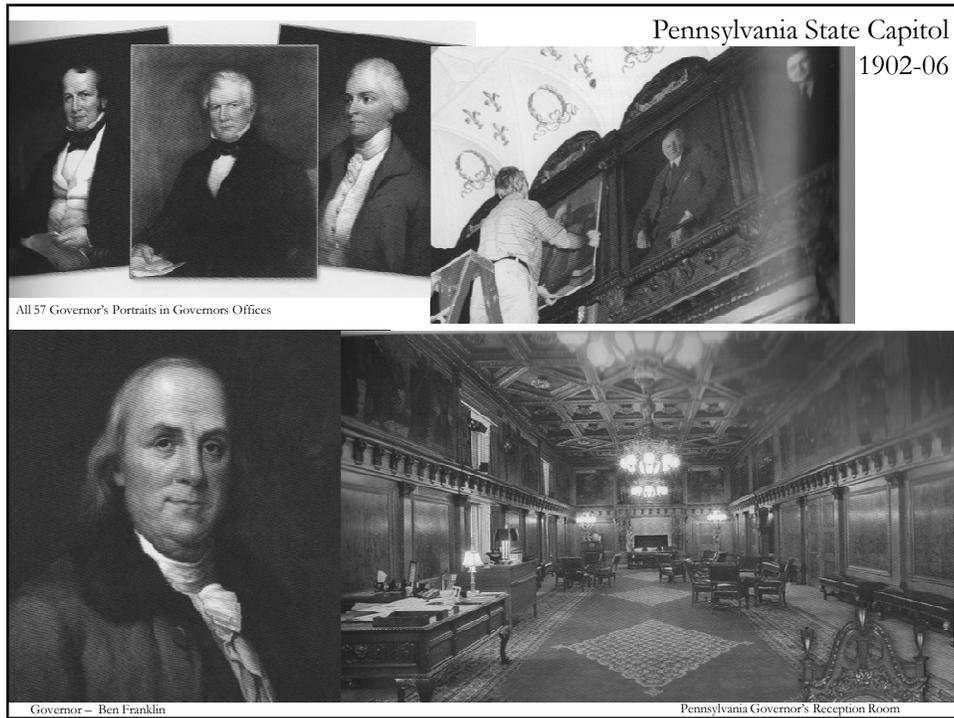
Texas State Capitol

Illinois State Capitol

Wisconsin State Capitol

# Governor's Portraits Presentation Capitol Art Subcommittee Meeting

11/02/2015  
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Indiana State Capitol  
 Indianapolis, IN  
 1878-1888

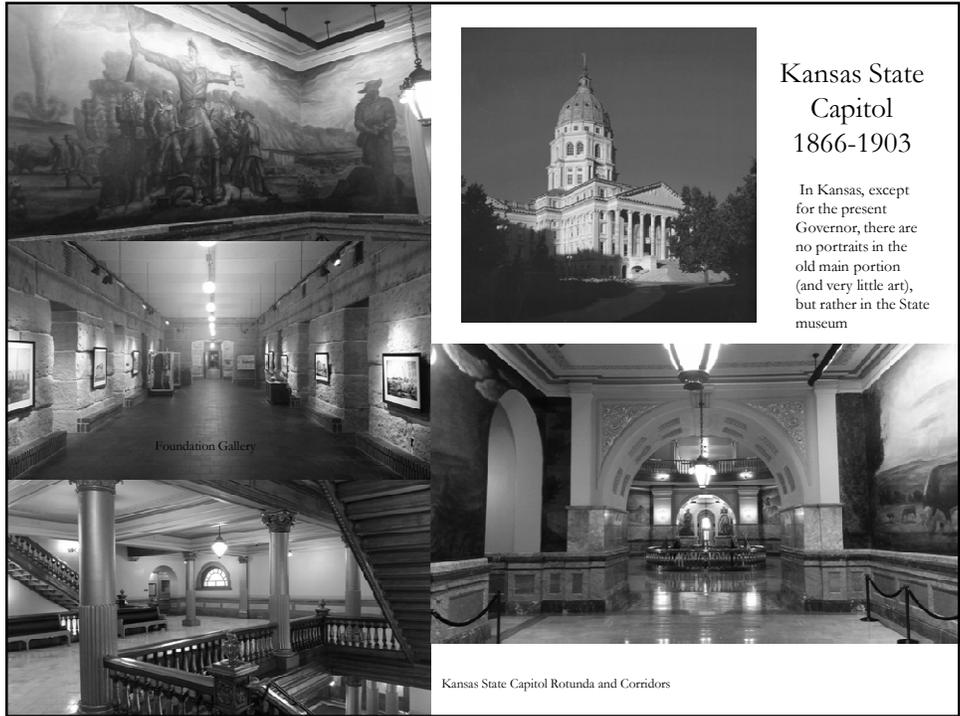
At Indiana no portraits visible but  
 there are eight bronze busts:  
 Four are governors, one is of  
 Indiana's first woman legislator, one is of a  
 leading African-American legislator, one of  
 a leading surgeon.



Wisconsin State Capitol  
 Madison, Wisconsin  
 1906-1917

Wisconsin has no governor portraits  
 in the main halls or public areas –  
 Governor are all shown in the fourth  
 floor gallery museum of the  
 Wisconsin Capitol Building  
 (Not handicapped accessible, one  
 floor above highest elevator stop)



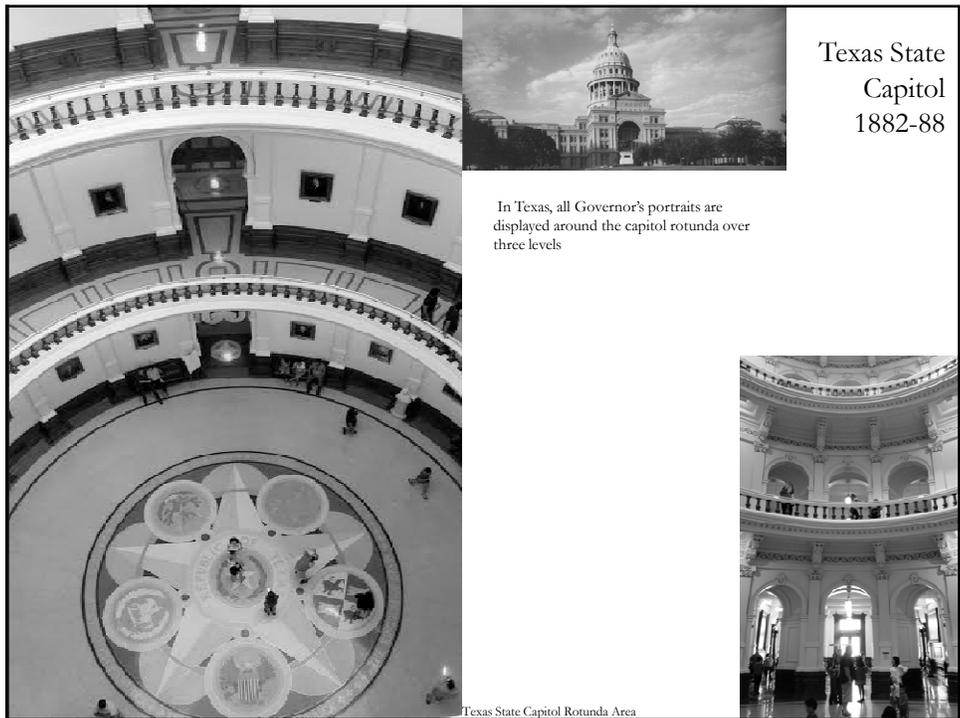


**Kansas State Capitol**  
1866-1903

In Kansas, except for the present Governor, there are no portraits in the old main portion (and very little art), but rather in the State museum

Foundation Gallery

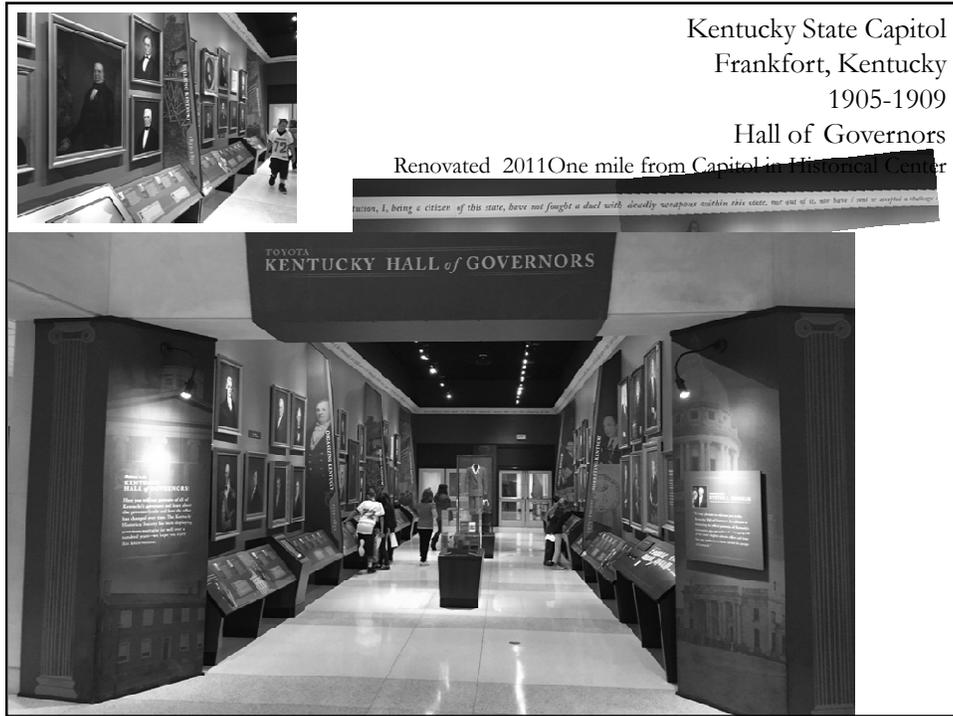
Kansas State Capitol Rotunda and Corridors



**Texas State Capitol**  
1882-88

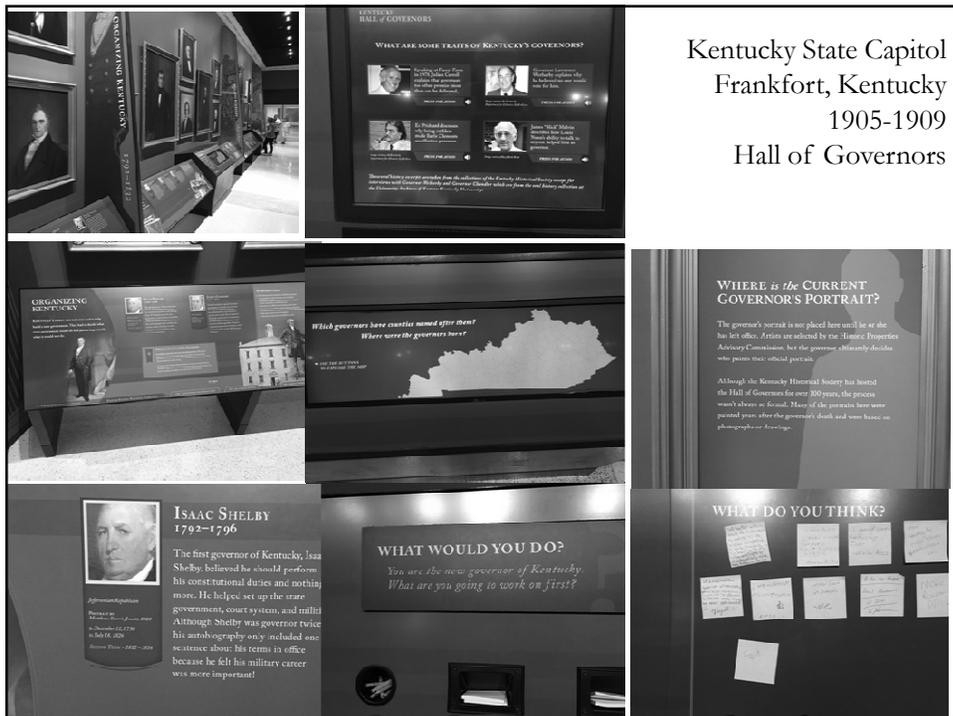
In Texas, all Governor's portraits are displayed around the capitol rotunda over three levels

Texas State Capitol Rotunda Area

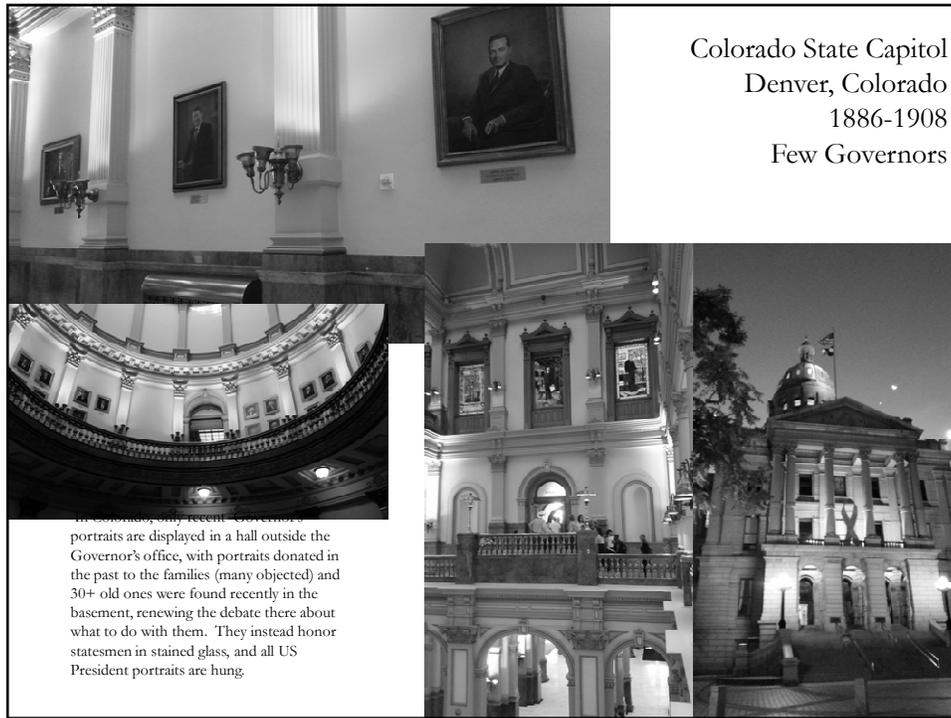


Kentucky State Capitol  
 Frankfort, Kentucky  
 1905-1909  
 Hall of Governors

Renovated 2011 One mile from Capitol in Historical Center



Kentucky State Capitol  
 Frankfort, Kentucky  
 1905-1909  
 Hall of Governors



## Other States

- Those that maintain a collection throughout the capitol:
  - Florida, California, Ohio, Maryland, New York (in "Hall of Governors"), Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Alabama, New Hampshire, Oklahoma (as sculptural busts)
- Those that maintain portraits in a State museum:
  - Connecticut

## Our Primary Options

1. Hang in Capitol
  - a) All portraits, all over (status quo)
  - b) Limited to a dedicated "Governor's Hall"
  - c) "Living History" portraits only (80 years?)
  - d) Most "worthy" portraits or rotating display
  - e) Digital "virtual" portrait gallery display
2. Remove entirely
  - a) Hang in History Center
  - b) Store in History center, occasionally displayed
  - c) Return to families

## DECISION CRITERIA

1. Future Duration – 100 years?
2. Space available – impact on other art objectives within capitol?
3. Impact on History Center as repository?
4. Effectiveness of historical "storytelling"

LET'S WORK THROUGH THESE OPTIONS TOGETHER

## 1. HANG IN CAPITOL

### a. All portraits, all over

- PRO
  - Maintains long-time status quo
  - Keeps portraits in constant eye of visitors
- CON
  - Will eventually run out of “meaningful” space, and squeeze out other art objectives.
  - Does not connect the person with the history of the time – limited ability to “storytell”

## 1. HANG IN CAPITOL

### b. “Governor’s Hall” Concept

- PRO
  - Creates a focus for the visitor on the role of the governor over time
  - Space is confined and bounded, enabling other art objectives to be met
- CON
  - Limited space means eventually we will run out of space to hang governor’s portraits, and will have to revisit a priority system.

## 1. HANG IN CAPITOL

### c. Living History Concept

- PRO
  - Maintains space requirement as a constant over time
  - Touches all visitors *personal* memories over their own lifetimes
  - Enables other art objectives to be met within limits of space
- CON
  - Takes the more distant historical figures out of regular view in the capitol
  - Shifts some burden of storage to History Center

## 1. HANG IN CAPITOL

### d. Rotating Display Concept

- PRO
  - Maintains space requirement as a constant over time
  - Can combine with Living History or Governor's Hall concepts to feature "old timers" prominently and in context of their historical period
- CON
  - Shifts some burden of storage to History Center
  - ?

## 1. HANG IN CAPITOL

### e. Virtual Display Concept

- PRO
  - Most compact option in terms of space, leaving most space to other art objectives.
  - Keeps all governor's within view of the visiting public, and within a context of the history of their time
  - Can combine with Governor's Hall and Living History concept to limit space requirements
- CON
  - Shifts all burden of storage to History Center (unless combined with return to families)
  - Sentimentality of a hanging portrait is gone (perhaps a generational notion?)
  - Potentially expensive to develop and research.

## 2. REMOVE ENTIRELY

### a. Hang in History Center, Permanent Display

- PRO
  - No impact on finding space to hang in capitol
  - Can be combined with "Governor's Hall" display option and placed in context of other events in state history (see Kentucky)
- CON
  - Impacts History Center in terms of storage and caretaking, and finding a permanent space.
  - Potential budgetary issue in creating permanent exhibit.

2. REMOVE ENTIRELY  
b. Store in History Center, Occasional  
Display

- PRO
  - No impact on finding space to hang in capitol
  - Can be combined with digital display option
- CON
  - Impacts History Center in terms of storage and caretaking
  - Removes actual images from public view for long periods of time

2. REMOVE ENTIRELY  
c. Return to Families

- PRO
  - No impact on finding space to hang or store
  - No impact on historical society as repository
  - Could be combined with digital repository and display
- CON
  - Removes the physical art permanently from the public arena which paid for it.

## NEXT STEPS

1. Identify recommended option(s) for portraits
2. Articulate the details of the proposal (i.e. where hung)
3. Frame the proposals for presentation to the public and determining public input
4. Hold the public hearings
5. Make final recommendation