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LESTER C. HUNT

Lester C. Hunt



United States Senator from Wyoming

In office

January 3, 1949 – June 19, 1954

Preceded by Edward V. Robertson

Succeeded by Edward D. Crippa

19th Governor of Wyoming

Lester Callaway Hunt, Sr. (July 8, 1892 – June 19, 1954), was a Democratic politician and dentist from the state of Wyoming. Hunt was the first to be elected to two consecutive terms as Wyoming's governor, serving as its 19th Governor from January 4, 1943, to January 3, 1949. In 1948, he was elected by an overwhelming margin to the U.S. Senate, and began his term on January 3, 1949.

Hunt was a fiscal conservative, who nevertheless supported a number of federal social programs and advocated for the federal government to make available low-cost health and dental insurance policies. He also supported a variety of programs proposed by the Eisenhower administration following the Republican landslide in the 1952 elections, including the abolition of segregation in the District of Columbia, and the expansion of Social Security.

An outspoken opponent of Senator Joseph McCarthy's anti-Communist campaign, Hunt challenged McCarthy and other Senators cooperating in his anti-Communist campaign by championing a proposed law restricting Congressional immunity and allowing individuals to sue members of Congress for slanderous statements. In June 1953, Hunt's son was arrested in Washington on charges of soliciting sex with an undercover male police officer. Several Republican senators, including McCarthy, threatened Hunt with prosecution of his son and wide publication of the event, unless he abandoned plans to run for re-election and resigned immediately, which Hunt refused to do. His son was convicted and fined on October 6, 1953, and on April 15, 1954, Hunt announced his intention to stand for re-election. Hunt changed his mind, however, after a Senate colleague renewed the threat to use his son's arrest against him, and on June 19, 1954, in a depressed state of mind, Hunt committed suicide in his U.S. Senate office.

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