John Rutledge (September 17, 1739 – June 21, 1800) was an American statesman and judge. He was the first Governor of South Carolina following the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the 31st overall. For a time, he held dictatorial powers in that state. He was a delegate to the Constitutional Convention, and he signed the United States Constitution. He served as an Associate Justice on the U.S. Supreme Court, and was the second Chief Justice of the Court from July to December 1795. He was the elder brother of Edward Rutledge, a signatory of the Declaration of Independence.

In mid 1765 Rutledge was appointed a delegate to the Stamp Act Congress. This congress produced a resolution that stated that it was "the undoubted right of Englishmen, that no taxes be imposed on them but with their own consent, given personally, or by their representatives". Rutledge chaired a committee that drew up a petition to the House of Lords attempting to persuade them to reject the Stamp Act. They were ultimately unsuccessful.

When the delegates returned to South Carolina after the Congress adjourned, they found the state in turmoil. The people had destroyed all of the revenue stamps they could get their hands on and they broke into suspected Loyalists' houses to search for stamps. When the Stamp Act went into effect on November 1, 1765, there were no stamps in the entire colony. Dougal Campbell, the Charleston court clerk, refused to issue any papers without the stamps. Because of this, all legal processes in the entire state came to a standstill until news that the Stamp Act had been repealed reached South Carolina in early May of the next year.

After the Stamp Act conflict ended, Rutledge went back into private life, and to his law practice. Besides serving in the colonial legislature, he did not involve himself in politics. His law practice continued to expand and he became fairly wealthy as a result.

In 1774, Rutledge was sent to the First Continental Congress. It is not known for certain exactly what John Rutledge contributed during this assembly. In the notes we have of the actions of this Congress, the name is given simply as "Rutledge", despite the fact that John's brother Edward Rutledge was also present. In any case, the most important contribution made by "Rutledge" to the Congress was during the debate of how to appropriate votes in the Congress. Some wanted it to be determined by the population of the colonies. Others wanted to give each colony one vote. "Rutledge" observed that as the Congress had no legal authority to force the colonies to accept its decisions, it would make the most sense to give each colony one vote. The other delegates ultimately agreed to this proposal.

John Rutledge died on June 21, 1800, at the age of 60. He was interred at St. Michael's Episcopal Church in Charleston.