

**PCOL – Management and Human Resources Committee
Recommendation on Legislator Compensation**

People elected to public offices often times make some sort of sacrifice to serve, and the decisions they make affect the lives of every Oregonian. In particular, the committee discussed the nature of legislative work and has concluded that Oregon has a part-time Legislative Assembly with a full-time workload. With this mix of obligations in district and in Salem, and the obligations of their personal careers and lives, it can be challenging to attract a group of citizens with diverse backgrounds and experiences to represent Oregonians.

Demographic data was provided to the committee illustrating how the Legislative Assembly has changed over the past 40 years. In general, there is a decline in the number of early and mid-career legislators and an increase in the number of late-career or retired legislators. In terms of employment, there has been a decrease in the number of legislators involved in agriculture, law, banking and insurance, but there has been an increase in the general category of small business owners and those who identify legislator as their employment. These trends lead us to assume that low legislator salary is one reason preventing qualified people from participating in the legislative process.

High legislator salaries should not be the reason for a person to run for office. An increase in salaries may help create an environment that attracts high quality citizens from broad backgrounds to participate in the process. The committee stresses that legislative service should not be perceived as a career, but a calling to public service.

Recommendation

The committee recommends modifications to Oregon’s existing Public Officials Compensation Commission. The purpose of the commission is to establish salaries for the state’s elected officials and to remove political consideration from the process. The commission is required to base salaries of elected officials on realistic standards in order to pay them according to the duties of their office and to attract citizens of the highest quality to public service.

It is important to provide adequate and appropriate compensation for elected officials with acknowledgment that these are voluntary civic service positions. The committee believes that the public would rather be represented by a citizen legislature than a professional legislative body. A citizen legislature includes members of diverse ages, employment and financial backgrounds.

As the commission is considering a salary recommendation for legislators, we urge them to take into account the impacts of all other possible forms of legislator compensation including but not limited to: per diem payments during session and interim, mileage payments during session and interim, personal use of campaign funds, and hiring of family members as personal staff. To acknowledge the vast geography of the state, the commission should also review the impact on a limited group of legislators who must maintain at least two residences in order to participate in the process and perhaps develop a more equitable geographic differential in salary.

Membership of the Commission

It is important for citizens to make decisions about compensation for elected officials. The public should be invested in understanding the jobs that public officials do, what their compensation is and how high quality candidates can be attracted to these civic service jobs.

- To demonstrate their own public virtue and participation, all members must have voted in the two General Elections prior to appointment to the commission.
- At all times the majority of commission members are to be public members selected by lot by the Secretary of State.

- 11 or more members depending on the number of Congressional Districts in Oregon:
 - Two members appointed by the Governor, confirmed by the Senate, with background in compensation management;
 - One member appointed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court;
 - One member appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;
 - One member appointed by the President of the Senate;
 - One member from each congressional district selected by lot by the Secretary of State; and
 - One member selected by lot by the Secretary of State from the state at-large.
- The Commission will be staffed by the Department of Administrative Services

Salaries Set by the Commission

The commission shall establish annual salaries for the following elective officers in the Executive, Judicial and Legislative branches of government:

- Governor
- Secretary of State
- State Treasurer
- Attorney General
- Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor and Industries
- Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals
- Court of Appeals Judges
- Chief Judge of the Supreme Court
- Supreme Court Judges
- Circuit Court Judges
- Tax Court Judges
- Legislative Assembly
 - Members
 - President of the Senate
 - Majority Leader of the Senate
 - Minority Leader of the Senate
 - Speaker of the House of Representatives
 - Majority Leader of the House of Representatives
 - Minority Leader of the House of Representatives

Legislative Action on Salary Recommendations from the Commission

- Commission must report salary recommendations to the Governor and Legislature by October 31 of each even-numbered year.
- Subject to appropriation, the recommended salaries take effect July 1 of odd-numbered years.
- Pursuant to section 1, Article VII (Amended) of the Oregon Constitution, the salaries of the Chief Justice and judges may not be diminished during the term for which they are elected.

Legislator - Basic Job Description

Prior to Regular Session

- Campaign during Primary and General Election seasons to be elected to the position of Representative or Senator. Campaign activities may include walking neighborhoods, debates and appearances, fundraising activities, meeting constituents, interest groups and lobby, etc.
- After election, prepare to spend six or more months in Salem to participate in the regular legislative session. Preparation may include making arrangements to take time off of work, temporarily moving

a household to Salem, temporarily moving a family to Salem, making arrangements for someone to care for in-district home and family members, etc.

- After election, work with legislative leadership and staff to get committee assignments, office assignment, stationery and supplies, hire staff, etc.
- After election, request legislative concepts and pre-session file bills. Work with constituents, interest groups, legislators and the lobby on possible legislation.

Regular Session

- Attend committee meetings and floor sessions to consider bills and amendments - generally several hours per day.
- Prepare to participate in committee meetings and floor sessions by reviewing bills and amendments and office correspondence related to them. Consult with colleagues about proposed legislation.
- Meet with constituents, interest groups, lobby, legislative and agency staff on any or all legislation being considered by the body.
- Respond to correspondence from constituents, interest groups and the lobby on any or all legislation being considered by the body.
- Participate in workgroups and other meetings in Salem.
- Participate in in-district meetings.
- Attend sponsored functions.

Interim Activities

- Return their daily life to the district.
- Attend committee meetings in Salem or other parts of Oregon several times per month.
- Prepare to participate in committee meetings in Salem.
- Senators attend floor session for confirmation of Executive Appointments during Emergency Board week.
- Emergency Board members participate in two-day meetings at least six times during interim.
- Respond to concerns and requests from constituents, interest groups, lobby and colleagues on problems and issues related to state government.
- Consider drafting legislation based on interim activities.
- Campaign for re-election.

Committee Chairs

- Additional work with legislative staff to develop work plans, agendas, bills and amendments for discussion in committee.
- Additional interaction with interest groups, lobby and legislators about issues and bills to be discussed in committee.
- Lead committee meetings and respond to actions of committee members and witnesses.

Legislative Leaders

- Work with colleagues to advance legislative agendas.
- Meet with legislators, interest groups and the lobby about issues pending before the body.