



OLR RESEARCH REPORT

April 6, 2011

2011-R-0152

COMPARISON OF THE PER CAPITA COSTS OF OPERATING THE CALIFORNIA AND CONNECTICUT LEGISLATURES

By: Amanda Gordon, Research Fellow

You asked us to compare the per capita costs of operating the California and Connecticut legislatures, including the salaries and expense reimbursements of legislators and staff. The following information does not include the cost of Connecticut legislators' benefits—we are unable to obtain that information at this time.

SUMMARY

The California legislature has 120 legislators, representing nearly 40 million people. Its FY10 operating costs were \$342,046,000 or \$8.55 per capita. California's legislators are paid a base salary of \$95,291 and have a per diem expense reimbursement of \$173 for each day they are in session. Each senator is generally assigned nine personal staff and assembly members receive at least four.

In comparison, the Connecticut legislature has 187 legislators, representing 3.5 million people. Its operating costs in FY10 were \$70,121,472 or \$20.03 per capita. Connecticut legislators are paid a base salary of \$28,000 and do not receive a per diem expense reimbursement. Each senator is provided with one staff person. House members are provided with personal staff on a ratio of one staff assistant for every four representatives.

COSTS OF OPERATING THE CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE

California has a full-time legislature with 120 legislators (40 Senate and 80 Assembly members) who represent nearly 40 million people. Its operating costs in FY10 were approximately \$342 million or \$8.55 per capita.

California's legislators are paid a base salary of \$95,291. They also have a per diem expense reimbursement of \$173 for each day they are in session. Senators are allowed to hire one professional aide and three secretaries, and a district office staff of two professional aides and three secretaries. Each assembly member is provided with two full-time clerical personnel assigned to the capitol. In the districts, each assembly member receives an allowance to hire staff, including at least one secretary and an administrative assistant. Table 1 provides a breakdown of the legislature's FY10 expenditures.

Table 1: California Legislature Expenditures (FY10)

Category	Expenditure (\$)
Legislator salaries	15,718,000
Staff Salaries and employee benefits	251,020,000*
Expenses (e.g. session per diem, mileage, automotive)	5,701,000
Operating expenses	69,607,000
TOTAL	342,046,000

*Legislators' benefits included.

Source: California Governor's Budget (2011).

COSTS OF OPERATING THE CONNECTICUT LEGISLATURE

The Connecticut legislature has 187 legislators (36 senators and 151 representatives) who represent approximately 3.5 million people. Its operating costs in FY10 were \$70,121,472 or \$20.03 per capita.

Connecticut legislators are paid a base salary of \$28,000 and do not receive a per diem expense reimbursement. Each senator is provided with a full-time assistant and house members are provided with personal staff on a ratio of one staff assistant for every four representatives. Private contractual secretarial services, including a toll-free, call-in dictation option, is also provided to all legislators. Table 2 provides a breakdown of these costs in FY10.

Table 2: Connecticut State Legislature Expenditures (FY10)

Category	Expenditure (\$)
Legislators, temporary, and sessional staff salaries	7,529,978
Staff salaries (caucus and nonpartisan staff) and employee benefits	47,040,416**
Expenses (i.e. mileage, legislator "undocumented expenses")	2,529,978
Operating Expenses	13,021,100
TOTAL	70,121,472

**Legislators' benefits not included.

Source: Connecticut Office of Fiscal Analysis (2010).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For more information, see the following links:

California Governor's Budget:

www.ebudget.ca.gov/pdf/GovernorsBudget/0010/0100.pdf (Senate and Assembly expenditures);

www.ebudget.ca.gov/pdf/GovernorsBudget/0010/0160.pdf (Legislative Counsel Bureau expenditures)

California legislative payroll: www.senate.ca.gov/~newsen/senate_payroll.pdf (Senate staff); www.assembly.ca.gov/defaulttext.asp (Assembly members and staff)

Comparison of full- and part-time legislatures in all 50 states:

www.ncsl.org/LegislaturesElections/OrganizationProcedureFacilities/FullandPartTimeLegislatures/tabid/16701/Default.aspx?tabid=16701#side_by_side

Comparison of legislator compensation in all 50 states:

www.ncsl.org/default.aspx?tabid=20117

Comparison of legislator personal staff in all 50 states:

www.ncsl.org/default.aspx?tabid=14786.

AG: ek