
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 31 (File 402, as amended by Senate "A")*

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL COMPENSATION.

SUMMARY:

This bill creates a 12-member Commission on Judicial Compensation to make recommendations on judicial compensation, taking into account factors the bill specifies. Specifically, the bill requires the commission to:

1. examine the adequacy of and need for adjustments to compensation for judges, family support magistrates, senior judges, judge trial referees, and family support referees;
2. make compensation recommendations every four years, beginning by January 2, 2013; and
3. report its findings to the governor, Office of Policy and Management (OPM) secretary, legislature, chief justice, and chief court administrator.

By January 9, 2013 and every four year after, the bill requires the chief court administrator to estimate expenditures needed to implement the report's recommendations for each fiscal year of the next and the subsequent biennium and transmit them to the OPM secretary, Appropriations Committee through the Office of Fiscal Analysis, and Judiciary Committee. The governor's biennial budget must include the chief court administrator's estimated expenditures. By law, the governor's budget must already include the Judicial Branch's estimated expenditures from the chief court administrator.

The bill removes the existing Compensation Commission's responsibility to make recommendations for judges' compensation, pensions, workers' compensation, and other benefits, leaving it

responsible for making recommendations regarding compensation for legislators and constitutional officers.

*Senate Amendment "A" deletes provisions giving the new commission's compensation recommendations the force of law unless changed by the legislature; requires the chief court administrator to send estimates of expenditures to implement the commission's recommendations to OPM and OPM to include them in the governor's biennial budget; and adds members to the commission.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2012

MEMBERS

The bill requires commission members to be appointed as follows:

1. four by the governor;
2. one each by the Senate president pro tempore, House speaker, and House and Senate majority and minority leaders; and
3. two by the Supreme Court chief justice.

To the extent practicable, the bill requires appointing authorities to appoint members with experience in financial management, human resources administration, or determining executive compensation.

The bill limits members to only one four-year term, but they may serve until a successor is appointed and qualified. Appointing authorities can fill a vacancy for the unexpired portion of the term.

The bill requires the commission to elect its chairperson from among its members. A majority is a quorum.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

The bill requires the commission to consider all appropriate factors when making compensation recommendations, including the:

1. state's overall economic climate;
2. inflation rate;

3. compensation of other states' and federal judges;
4. compensation of attorneys employed by government agencies, academic institutions, and private and nonprofit organizations;
5. interest in attracting highly qualified and experienced attorneys to serve in judicial capacities;
6. compensation adjustments for state employees during the applicable fiscal years; and
7. state's ability to fund compensation increases.

JUDICIAL OFFICIALS AND COMPENSATION

The table below lists the judicial officials for which the commission must make compensation recommendations and their compensation under current law.

<i>Position</i>	<i>Current Compensation</i>
Supreme Court Chief Justice	\$175,645
Chief Court Administrator (if a judge or justice)	\$168,783
Supreme Court Associate Justice	\$162,520
Appellate Court Chief Judge	\$160,722
Appellate Court Judge	\$152,637
Deputy Chief Court Administrator (if a judge)	\$149,853
Superior Court Judge	\$146,780
Appellate, Judicial District, or Chief Administrative Judge	\$1,000 in addition to judicial salary
Senior Judge or Judge Trial Referee	\$220 per day
Chief Family Support Magistrate	\$127,782
Family Support Magistrate	\$121,615
Family Support Referee	\$190 per day

COMMITTEE ACTION

Judiciary Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 34 Nay 8 (03/26/2012)

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 12 Nay 0 (05/02/2012)