

State of Connecticut



**COMPENSATION COMMISSION FOR
ELECTED STATE OFFICERS AND GENERAL
ASSEMBLY MEMBERS**

REPORT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

February 13, 2015

February 13, 2015

To: Members of the Connecticut General Assembly

On behalf of the Compensation Commission for Elected State Officers and General Assembly Members established by section 2-9a of the Connecticut General Statutes, I hereby offer the commission's report to the members of the Connecticut General Assembly's 2015 legislative session.

As you are aware, the commission is charged with recommending to the General Assembly legislative proposals for salary, expenses, pension, workers' compensation, and any other benefits to be paid to the governor, other state constitutional officers, and General Assembly members (CGS § 2-9a(b)).

The commission's members are pleased to serve the State of Connecticut in this capacity. We are ready to provide any information and assistance the General Assembly may require in its deliberations on legislation and any other necessary action.

Sincerely,

Richard Balducci
Chairman

**COMPENSATION COMMISSION FOR ELECTED STATE OFFICERS AND
GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS**

MEMBERS

Appointed by the Governor

Susan W. Ahrens

John Miller

Lewis B. Rome

Appointed by the Senate President Pro Tempore

Biagio "Billy" Ciotto

Mary Ann Handley

Appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives

Richard Balducci

Vacancy

Appointed by the Senate Minority Leader

Justin Bernier

Vincent Marino

Appointed by the House Minority Leader

Richard Eriksen

Paul S. McNamara

OBJECTIVES

For many years, the work of independent bipartisan compensation commissions has been guided by seven objectives:

1. to recommend compensation levels that will assure that state service can attract competent and effective people;
2. to recommend levels that will make public service possible for every eligible citizen, not just those whose financial status enables them to serve;
3. to recommend levels that will compensate elected officials adequately for the time required and the experience necessary to perform the duties of their offices;
4. to recommend compensation appropriate for the officials of a state that is economically and socially diverse and highly developed industrially;
5. to recommend levels that compare favorably with those set for elected officials in states of similar complexity and size;
6. to recognize changes in cost of living indices for the state, region, or both; and
7. to recommend compensation levels appropriate to the state's financial resources.

Commission members believe firmly that their purpose is to help attract able people from all walks of life to the service of the State of Connecticut. Great public servants often draw from their private careers the experience, wisdom, and understanding of people's lives, needs, and aspirations that superior state service requires.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Governor and Constitutional Officers

Salaries for the governor and other constitutional officers should be increased by 10%, effective at the start of the next four-year term (January 9, 2019). This would increase the governor's annual salary from \$150,000 to \$165,000. Annual salaries for the lieutenant governor, treasurer, secretary of the state, comptroller, and attorney general would increase from \$110,000 to \$121,000.

General Assembly Members

Base salaries for all members of the General Assembly should be increased by 10%, effective at the start of the next two-year term (January 4, 2017). This would increase the annual base salary of a rank and file General Assembly member from the current \$28,000 to \$30,800. Base salaries for legislative leaders, committee chairs, and ranking members would also increase by 10% (e.g., the Senate president pro tempore and House speaker's salaries would increase from \$38,689 to \$42,558).

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

The commission met on January 21, 2015 in room 5301 of the Legislative Office Building in Hartford. Commissioners Balducci, Bernier, Ciotto, Eriksen, Marino, McNamara, and Miller attended. (Minutes from the meeting are attached.)

At the meeting, nonpartisan staff welcomed the commission and reviewed its charge and then suggested, as required under statute, that the commissioners choose a chairperson. Commissioner McNamara nominated Commissioner Balducci as chairman and Commissioner Ciotto seconded the motion. The commissioners voted unanimously to elect Commissioner Balducci as chairman.

The commission then considered:

- the current salaries of the governor, constitutional officers, and general assembly members, as specified in CGS §§ 3-2, 3-11, 3-77, 3-111, 3-124, and 2-8;
- a report prepared by the Council of State Governments that compared the 2014 salaries for the governors of all 50 states (http://knowledgecenter.csg.org/kc/system/files/CR%20FF_Governors%27_Salaries_2014_Alt%20%282%29.pdf);
- a report prepared by the National Conference of State Legislatures that compared the 2014 state legislators' salaries in all 50 states (<http://www.ncsl.org/research/about-state-legislatures/2014-ncsl-legislator-salary-and-per-diem-table.aspx>);
- the commission's most recent report, issued in February 2011 (<http://www.cga.ct.gov/2011/rpt/2011-R-0100.htm>); and
- the commission's most recent recommendation for increasing General Assembly members' salaries, issued in March 2008 (OLR Report 2008-R-0195).

Based on these considerations, the commission makes the following findings and recommendations.

GOVERNOR AND CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS

Findings

The commission believes that having a reasonably compensated governor, lieutenant governor, treasurer, secretary of the state, comptroller, and attorney

general is essential to Connecticut continuing to have a high quality state government. The salaries for these six constitutional officers are set in statute and change only when the legislature specifically acts to change them. Currently, no pay increase is scheduled and salaries for the governor and the five other constitutional officers have not increased since January 2003. By law, the earliest they could increase again is in January 2019. Sixteen years without a pay increase does not properly reflect the importance of the jobs that the governor and other constitutional officers perform.

Recommendations

The commission recommends that the annual salaries for the governor and constitutional officers be increased by 10% effective January 9, 2019. Table 1 shows their current and recommended annual salaries.

Table 1: Current and Recommended Salaries of the Governor and Constitutional Officers

Position	Current Salary	Recommended Salary (effective January 9, 2019)
	\$150,000	\$165,000
Lt. Governor	\$110,000	\$121,000
Treasurer	\$110,000	\$121,000
Secretary of State	\$110,000	\$121,000
Comptroller	\$110,000	\$121,000
Attorney General	\$110,000	\$121,000

The commission considered a motion to recommend increasing the governor’s annual salary by 10% and a motion to recommend increasing the annual salaries of the other constitutional officers by 10%. Chairman Balducci and Commissioners Ciotto, Eriksen, Marino, McNamara, and Miller voted in favor of both motions. Commissioner Bernier voted against both motions.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS

Findings

The commission believes that the legislature serves the state best as a part-time legislature, in accordance with the Connecticut Constitution. However, salaries for General Assembly members have not increased since January 2001 and, by law, cannot increase again until January 2017 at the earliest. Sixteen years without an increase does not properly reflect the importance of the job that state legislators

perform for the state, including enacting laws and approving new budgets that affect the daily lives of each and every state resident.

Recommendations

The commission recommends that base salaries for all general assembly members be increased by 10%, effective January 4, 2017. Table 2 shows General Assembly members’ current and recommended base salaries.

Table 2: Current and Recommended Salaries of General Assembly Members

Position	Current Base Salary	Recommended Base Salary (Effective January 4, 2017)
House speaker and Senate president pro tempore	\$38,689	\$42,558
House and Senate majority and minority leaders	\$36,835	\$40,519
Deputy House speaker and House and Senate deputy majority and minority leaders	\$34,446	\$37,891
House and Senate assistant majority and minority leaders, majority and minority whips, and standing committee chairs	\$32,241	\$35,465
Standing committee ranking members	\$30,403	\$33,443
Rank and file members	\$28,000	\$30,800

Chairman Balducci and Commissioners Ciotto, Eriksen, Marino, McNamara, and Miller voted in favor of the recommendation. Commissioner Bernier voted against it.

The commission also acknowledges that the law provides all General Assembly members with an additional \$4,500 (for representatives) or \$5,500 (for senators) for unspecified expenses (CGS § 2-8(b)). It does not recommend increasing the allowance for these expenses.

Attachment A: 1/21/15 Meeting Minutes

Commission on Compensation of State Elected Officials
Meeting Minutes
January 21, 2015
Room 5301, LOB, Hartford

Attending:

Richard Balducci
Justin Bernier
Biagio “Billy” Ciotto
Richard Eriksen
Vincent Marino
Paul McNamara
John Miller

Not Attending:

Susan Ahrens
Lewis Rome
Mary Ann Handley

I. Meeting Convened

Staff member John Moran welcomed the commissioners and convened the meeting at 3:03 p.m.

II. CGS § 2-9a and the Commission’s Charge

Mr. Moran provided an overview of the law* creating the commission including the commission’s obligation to issue a report this year (it is required to do so every odd numbered year) regarding possible recommendations regarding the salaries and other compensation of the governor, state constitutional officers, and members of the General Assembly. He also noted that the law requires the commission to select a chairman every two years.

III. Selection of Commission Chairperson

Commissioner McNamara nominated Commissioner Balducci as chair. Commissioner Ciotto seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

IV. Discussion of Possible Recommendations

a. Discussion of Governor’s salary

Mr. Moran distributed various documents, such as tables showing the current salaries of governors and of state legislators in the 50 states. Chairman Balducci opened the discussion by noting the position of governor is the head of Connecticut state government, which is an approximately \$20 billion a year enterprise. He noted that in the private sector the head of such a large enterprise would never be paid as little as \$150,000 as the governor is in Connecticut. Commissioner Marino noted that in some towns there are municipal officials and school superintendents who currently are paid more than Connecticut’s governor.

Commissioner Erikson noted that public officials, such as governors, are not in their field for the money or they would have chosen another profession. He suggested a pay increase was deserved out of respect for the office.

Commissioner Bernier noted that the governor's salary is already higher than the national average (\$134,390**) and any sizeable increase would put the position in the top pay echelon, which is not appropriate for a small state.

The commissioners discussed how it is not a simple task to compare states when they vary greatly in population, density, cost of living, and other factors.

Commissioner McNamara noted that the governor's current salary is not out of step with the neighboring peers (Massachusetts, \$151,800; New York, \$179,000; Rhode Island, \$129,210**)

Commissioner Bernier stated that any pay raise would be inappropriate at a time when the state's financial situation was uncertain and the state's citizens have seen their real wages stagnate while taxes and the cost of living increase.

Commissioner Balducci said that this was not about benefiting a particular person, but trying to ensure the position is reasonably compensated. He also noted that any increase for the position of governor would not take effect until after the next election and that the governor's position has not had a raise in 12 years. Furthermore, considering the recommendations would not take effect until after a new election, the soonest the governor's office would see a raise is 2019, making it 16 years between raises.

The commissioners discussed the possibility of recommending a form of automatic raises that could be hinged on the cost of living or another mechanism to avoid the situation of going so many years without a raise. Commissioner Bernier said an automatic method would remove any debate on the matter. Commissioner McNamara noted that the purpose of the commission was to consider such issues at least once every two years.

Chairman Balducci moved to recommend that the annual salary of the office of governor be increased 10% from \$150,000 to \$165,000, effective after the next election. Commissioner Miller seconded the motion. The commission voted 6-1 to approve the recommendation with all present voting yes except Commissioner Bernier, who voted no.

b. Discussion of the Other Constitutional Officers' Salaries

The other constitutional officers (lieutenant governor, treasurer, secretary of the state, comptroller, and attorney general) have also not had a raise since 2003. Commissioner Ciotto moved to recommend that the annual salary of each of the constitutional officers be increased 10% from \$110,000 to \$121,000. Chairman Balducci seconded. After some discussion, the commission voted 6-1 to approve the recommendation with all present voting yes except Commissioner Bernier, who voted no.

c. Discussion of General Assembly Members' Salaries

Chairman Balducci began the discussion by noting that state legislators have traditionally been reluctant to vote on a bill that would raise the salaries of the legislators themselves. He noted that it has also been 12 years since they had a raise, and as the law bars a sitting legislature from voting to give itself a raise, the earliest a raise could take effect is 2017, 14 years after the last one. He noted that while he supports the idea of a part-time citizen legislature, the salary should not be so low that it impedes good candidates from deciding to serve. (Currently the annual base salary is \$28,000 with the top leaders making \$38,689, plus every house member gets \$4,500 and each senator \$5,500 for unspecified expenses.)

Commissioner Bernier noted that the legislators' current salaries were comparable to other states with part-time legislators, which made a pay increase unnecessary at this time.

Commissioner McNamara moved to recommend that the annual salary of General Assembly members be increased 10%, not including the unvouchered expense account, effective January 2017. (Rank and file members would see an increase from \$28,000 to \$30,800 with corresponding increases for committee chairs, ranking members, and other leadership positions. This would change the salary of the top leaders, the House speaker and Senate president pro tempore, from \$38,689 to \$42,557.) The commission voted 6-1 to approve the recommendation with all present voting yes, except Commissioner Bernier, who voted no.

V. Staff to Draw up Report for Commission Members to Review

Mr. Moran suggested that staff would write a draft report for all members to review and give input before it is finalized. The draft will be sent to each member for comment. Chairman Balducci said the goal was to finish by February 15, the statutory deadline for the commission to issue its report.

VI. Adjournment

Chairman Balducci thanked the members for their participation and adjourned the meeting at 4:18 p.m.

Notes:

*Statute creating the commission:

Sec. 2-9a. Compensation Commission for elected state officers and General Assembly members. (a)(1) There is created a Compensation Commission consisting of eleven members, three of whom shall be appointed by the Governor, two of whom shall be appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate, two of whom shall be appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives, two of whom shall be appointed by the minority leader of the Senate and two of whom shall be appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives. All members of said commission shall be appointed on or before July 1, 1971, and quadrennially thereafter, to serve for a term of four years. No person shall be appointed to said commission who is an official or employee of the state of Connecticut or any department, agency or political subdivision thereof, or who is an official or employee of any agency or institution more than ten per cent of the gross annual income of which is from state funds. Members shall not be compensated for their services as such but shall be reimbursed for all necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

(2) On or before July 15, 1971, and biennially thereafter, the commission shall elect a chairman from its members. A majority of the members of said commission shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of any business. Any action taken by said commission shall be by majority vote of those present.

(b) The Compensation Commission shall recommend to the General Assembly, on or before February fifteenth, in odd-numbered years, legislative proposals for salary, expenses, pension, workers' compensation and any other benefits to be paid to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of the State, Attorney General, Treasurer, Comptroller and members of the General Assembly. In its discretion, the commission also may submit its recommendation for such legislative proposals, on or before February fifteenth in even-numbered years. The General Assembly shall take action on such proposals at the session to which they are submitted. No proposals for legislative salary, if enacted by the General Assembly, shall become effective until the first Wednesday following the first Monday of the January succeeding the next election of members of the General Assembly. No proposals for salaries shall be effective as to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of the State, Attorney General, Treasurer and Comptroller until the first Wednesday following the first Monday of the January succeeding the next election of said officers. Any other proposals of benefits, if enacted, shall be applicable with respect to the incumbents in the offices covered. Said commission may recommend different rates of salary, expenses and allowances for members of the General Assembly for session and interim periods and may recommend rates of salary, expenses and allowances for members of the General Assembly who are officers which are different from that established for other members.

** The Council of State Governments, Governors' Salaries, 2014,
[http://knowledgecenter.csg.org/kc/system/files/CR%20FF_Governors' Salaries 2014 Alt%20\(2\).pdf](http://knowledgecenter.csg.org/kc/system/files/CR%20FF_Governors'_Salaries_2014_Alt%20(2).pdf)