

State of Connecticut



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

REPORT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

March 25, 2019

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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 2019 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

Vacancy

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 commission 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

The commission recommends no changes to the salaries of the governor and other constitutional officers at this time.

General Assembly Members

The commission recommends no changes to the salaries of members of the General Assembly at this time.

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

The commission met on March 21, 2019 in room 5300 of the Legislative Office Building in Hartford. (The meeting minutes are attached.)

The commission 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 2018 salaries for the governors of all 50 states
(<http://knowledgecenter.csg.org/kc/system/files/4.3.2018.pdf>);
- a report prepared by the National Conference of State Legislatures that compared 2018 state legislators' compensation in all 50 states
(<http://www.ncsl.org/research/about-state-legislatures/legislator-compensation-2018.aspx>); and
- the commission's most recent report, issued in February 2017.

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

Governor and Constitutional Officers

The commission acknowledges that the compensation for the governor and the other constitutional officers (i.e., lieutenant governor, treasurer, secretary of the state, comptroller, and attorney general) has not changed since 2003. The salaries for these six constitutional officers are set in statute and change only when the legislature specifically acts to change them. The governor's salary is \$150,000 and that of the other constitutional officers is \$110,000. Currently, no pay increase is scheduled and cannot change again until 2021. However, given the state's economic climate; recognizing that many of the state's residents are living on fixed incomes; and acknowledging that the current salaries are in line with that of other states, the commission recommends no changes to the compensation of the governor and the other constitutional officers at this time.

General Assembly Members

The commission believes that the legislature serves the state best as a part-time legislature, in accordance with the Connecticut Constitution. The General Assembly members receive a base pay of \$28,000 plus mileage reimbursement; certain leadership positions receive an incremental addition. The commission acknowledges that this amount has not changed since January 2001 and, by law, cannot increase again until January 2021 at the earliest.

The commission also acknowledges that even though the legislature is part-time, many members work most of the year. However, the commission believes that the current compensation is commensurate with other states that also have a part-time legislature. The commission recommends no changes to the compensation of General Assembly members at this time.

MEETING MINUTES

Commission on Compensation of State Elected Officials
Meeting Minutes
March 21, 2019
Room 5301, LOB, Hartford

Attending:

Not Attending:

Susan Ahrens

Mary Ann Handley

Vincent Marino

I. Meeting Convened

Chairman Balducci convened the meeting at 10:10 a.m.

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

Chairman Balducci 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) with recommendations regarding the salaries and other compensation of the governor, the state constitutional officers, and the members of the General Assembly.

III. Discussion of Possible Recommendations

a. Discussion of the governor's and the other constitutional officers' salaries

Chairman Balducci opened the discussion by noting that the position of governor is the head of Connecticut state government and the current annual salary for the position has not changed from \$150,000 since 2003. The current annual salary of \$110,000 for the other constitutional officers (Lt. Governor, Treasurer, Secretary of State, Comptroller, and Attorney General) has also remained unchanged since 2003.

Chairman Balducci commented that in today's economic environment when many Connecticut residents are on fixed incomes, it seems appropriate that the constitutional officer's salaries stay at their current levels.

Commissioner Bernier remarked that Connecticut's governor's compensation is in line with that of other state governors. Chairman Erickson agreed.

Chairman Balducci moved to recommend no change to the annual salary of the governor or the other constitutional officers. Commissioner Erickson seconded the motion. The commission voted 6-0 to approve the recommendation with all present voting yes.

b. Discussion of General Assembly Members Salary

Chairman Balducci opened the discussion by noting that Connecticut General Assembly is a part-time legislature and while the legislators have generally been meeting more frequently throughout the year, they are not paid for full-time positions. He also stated that the members' salaries have not increased since 2001, with salaries starting at \$28,000 upward depending on the member's position in addition to mileage reimbursement.

The House speaker and the Senate president pro tempore earn \$38,689; the House and Senate majority and minority leaders earn \$36,835; the deputy House speaker and House and Senate deputy majority and minority leaders earn \$34,446; the House and Senate assistant majority and minority leaders and majority and minority whips, and standing committee chairs earn \$32,241; the standing committee ranking members earn \$30,403; and the rank and file members earn \$28,000.

Commissioner Bernier stated that given the fact that the General Assembly members' positions are part-time positions, it is possible that the legislators may even be overpaid. He went on to remark that unless the positions become fulltime positions, the salaries should not increase as they are commensurate with similarly situated states.

Chairman Balducci expressed that one benefit of the part-time legislature is that it affords legislators time to meet and interact with their constituents.

Commissioner Erickson asked whether the commission's recommendation can be revisited should the state's economic climate change. Chairman Balducci confirmed that the statute authorizes the commission to revisit its recommendations every two years.

Chairman Balducci moved to recommend no change to the annual salary of the General Assembly members. Commissioner Bernier seconded the motion. The commission voted 6-0 to approve the recommendation with all present voting yes.

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

Ms. Kirby 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.

V. Adjournment

Chairman Balducci thanked the members for their participation and adjourned the meeting at 10:37 a.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.