

MINUTES
Approved by the Committee
Citizens' Committee on Legislative Compensation
Wednesday, November 06, 2024
8:00 A.M.
Room EW42
Boise, Idaho

Members in attendance: Mary Hasenoehrl, Dennis Johnson (Chair), Bryan Mooney, Neil Nelson, JoAnne Stringfield, and Jill Twedt.

LSO committee staff: Matt Drake, Frances Lippitt, and Jennifer Kish.

Others in attendance: Niklas Kleinworth – Idaho Freedom Foundation; Sulamita Rotante – American Action Fund; Faye Thompson – State Representative (Elect); Jason Hancock – House of Representatives.

Chair Johnson called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m. A roll was called showing all members in attendance. Chair Johnson requested any edits or corrections on the minutes of the October 24, 2024, meeting. Ms. Stringfield requested an edit be made to reflect that her question (page 3, 4th bullet) was about the "...Idaho individual salary." Ms. Hasenoehrl requested an edit be made to reflect that her question (page 2, 3rd bullet) was about the "...per diem increase." **Chair Johnson made the motion to approve the minutes with those edits; the minutes were approved by a unanimous voice vote.**

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

Chair Johnson invited public testimony to the committee.

Sulamita Rotante, on behalf of the American Action Fund, spoke against the proposed 43% raise for legislative members.

Niklas Kleinworth, on behalf of the Idaho Freedom Foundation, spoke against the proposed raise for legislative members and proposed a more modest raise of 3% in total - salary and per diem. He proposed no changes to the legislative benefits offered to members.

David Leavitt, D25B State Representative (elect), spoke (via Zoom) against the proposed raise for legislative members.

Chuck Winder, President Pro Tempore of the Idaho Senate (outgoing), spoke to the committee (via Zoom) in defense of the proposed raise for legislative members.

- Mr. Mooney asked about the increases to per diem and lodging in relation to the proposed increase to the base salary. Pro Tem Winder explained that housing costs have increased significantly across the state, even for those staying temporarily within the city. He also noted that the base salary increase was proposed in hopes of compensating members appropriately.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION / ACTION

Chair Johnson invited the members to discuss the information presented to the committee and to consider the value of the legislative positions, not as a reward but rather what amount of time a member spends on his/her duties while serving as a member of the Legislature. Chair Johnson noted that compensation had been previously proposed by legislative leadership and the motion reflecting that proposal had failed; as such, the chair would entertain other proposals.

- Ms. Stringfield asked to discuss the components of the previous motion. She preferred that the meal per diem not be included within the base salary as it would then be taxed and that seemed inappropriate.
- Ms. Hasenoehrl commented on the large increase proposed for leadership and preferred an increase across the board for all members.
- Mr. Mooney suggested a study on how other state legislatures compensate members to better understand the total impact of any and all methods of compensation.
- Mr. Nelson commented that the statistics were deceiving and did not even keep pace with the cost of inflation over the last 20 years.
- **Ms. Stringfield made a motion to increase the base salary for legislators from \$19,913 to \$25,000 per year (2025 and 2026) and to make no other changes to the per diem, benefits, or leadership positions; Ms. Hasenoehrl seconded the motion.** Ms. Stringfield explained that the \$25,000 amount was based on a percentage of a current state employee's median average salary. Ms. Twedt asked whether any changes would be made for those in leadership positions. Ms. Stringfield responded in the negative (no change). **Ms. Twedt proposed amending the original motion to include an increase in the base salary for the President Pro Tempore and the Speaker to the amount of \$5,500 and for the majority and minority leaders to the amount of \$2,500 per year; Mr. Nelson seconded the amending motion. Chair Johnson asked for a vote on the amendment to the motion; the amendment to the motion passed unanimously by voice vote. Chair Johnson asked for a roll call vote on the original motion which now included the amendment to the motion; the motion passed unanimously.**

With its business concluded, the committee adjourned at 8:45 a.m.

NOTE: Recordings of the meeting may be found under the committee's listing on the website.