

Steve Curry

January 11, 2017

To: Minnesota Legislative Salary Council

From: Steve Curry

Re: Legislative Compensation Proposal

As you examine data and determine what total compensation for legislators should be, please consider this:

Legislators have an employment contract that is considered by their constituents every two or four years when they run for election that is a very public job interview.

Even though their employment comes up for renewal every few years, they currently don't have measurable goals that their constituents can evaluate them against - or that they can measure themselves against during their employment - nor do they have any financial rewards for performing well on the job.

A compensation plan that pays them for getting their job done can be an incentive for legislators and can be a tool for constituents to easily gauge performance at elections when their job contract is up for renewal.

A comp plan involving performance metrics could be very complex or it can be as simple as:

- Determine the maximum % that a legislator's pay that will be determined by bonuses
- Determine the bonus amount per accomplishment
- Determine what an accomplishment is that shows that they are doing their job

Assuming that a legislator's job is to pass legislation that is in their constituents' interests, I would propose:

Pay a bonus to each legislator for each piece of legislation that passes out of their house that they vote for - only under these conditions:

- **A super majority (60%) of legislators in their house - either the House or the Senate - votes for the legislation**
- **The Governor signs the legislation**

Note: Requiring a super majority should prevent a single party holding both houses and the Governorship from pushing through legislation simply for personal financial gain. If a legislator misses a vote, they don't get paid the bonus for that piece of legislation.

Goals that can be attained by a comp plan like this are:

- Multi-party consensus through reduced polarization
- Increase approval levels for legislators (last polled at 29% Dem/18% Rep)
- A continual reminder to legislators that they have a job to do
- Minimize grand-standing and "ceremonial" votes that result in no legislation and only wastes time and resources
- Communicates that building consensus between parties, houses of the legislature and with the Governor is what gets work done

An example plan would be:

- Base salary: \$31,140
- Leadership Bonus: \$12,456 – if applicable
- Performance bonus of \$250 per "accomplishment" up to a maximum of 40% of total compensation
 - Accomplishment defined as:
 - Voting for legislation that a super majority (60%) of legislators in their house – either the House or the Senate – votes for **(and)**
 - The Governor signs the legislation

Conclusion:

This plan allows Minnesota to be a leader in citizen driven government. Only two other states have as unchecked a mandate as this Council has and after discussions with those states' compensation council chairs, they have not considered performance based compensation to date.