



## Legislative Pay

According to the [National Conference of State Legislatures](#), 21 states set legislative compensation by commission. Commission composition and power vary, with some recommendations going into effect immediately while others can be voted on by the legislature to negate the recommendation or have to be voted on to go into effect. Oregon and West Virginia are both addressing their legislative pay right now, New York hadn't had a pay raise in 20 years until their newly formed commission recommended one in 2018, and half of our neighboring states use a commission to set legislative pay. Of interest, [research](#) seems to indicate that public opposition to increasing legislative pay stems not from wanting to keep salaries low but from a great level of overestimation of how much legislators are already paid.

### West Virginia

Considering a bill (SB740) that ties legislative pay to the per capita income of West Virginia determined by the U.S. Census Bureau the prior year. The pay raise would not take effect until the next legislature takes office in January 2025. Current pay of \$20K would increase to \$28K. Have a 7-member Citizens Legislative Compensation Commission that recommended lawmakers receive a raise of \$10,000. The commission, which meets every four years as spelled out in the state code, passed a resolution earlier this year recommending the pay increase.

### Oregon

Considering SB786, which brings legislators' paychecks in line with the average wage of a "covered" employee within Oregon. That is the average wage for the 90% of workers whose employers pay unemployment insurance taxes. Would increase pay from \$35,052 to over \$64K. Pay would be adjusted every two years and could not decrease more than 2% a year if average wages go down.

### New York

Every four years a commission on Legislative, Judicial, & Executive Compensation is established with seven appointed members – three are designated by the Governor, one by the President Pro Tempore of the New York State Senate, one by the Speaker of the New York State Assembly, and two by the Chief Judge of the New York State Court of Appeals, one of whom serves as chair of the Commission. The first recommendation from the commission in 2018 was for a 63% pay increase over three years and was an increase from \$79.5K to \$130K. This was the first pay raise in 20 years. Recommendations go into effect automatically unless lawmakers reject them.

### Missouri

Salaries are controlled by the 21 members of the Missouri Citizens' Commission on Compensation for Elected Officials, who meet every two years. Lawmakers did not reject the commission's recommendation for a pay raise for the first time in 13 years in 2021. The commission report set legislative pay at "the same percentage increase as was received by Circuit Judges in their most recent yearly increase." Legislative salaries went up 5%, from \$35,915 per year in fiscal 2021 to now \$37,711. Provision tying raises to judicial pay boosts was designed to get around political reluctance to vote for pay raises.

### Oklahoma

The Legislative Compensation Board controls salaries. The Board is made up of five members appointed by the Governor and two members appointed by both the House Speaker and Senate President Pro Tem. Every two years, the Board reviews and may vote to change the compensation paid to the members of the Legislature. Such a change automatically becomes effective on the fifteenth day following the succeeding general election. In 2017, the Board voted to cut lawmakers' salaries by 8.4 percent, from \$38,400 to \$35,021. The cut was admitted to be a punitive measure. In October 2019, the Board voted to raise lawmakers' base salary from \$35,021 to \$47,500, a 35.6 percent increase and the first raise in 20 years. The 2021 meeting of the board held pay at the existing level.

### Nebraska

Pay is set at \$1,000 a month, \$12K a year, via the state constitution. 2012 proposal to increase pay to \$22,500 was defeated by Nebraska voters by a 68% to 31% margin. The last pay raise amendment that passed was in 1988 and increased pay from \$400 a month to the current \$1,000.

### Colorado

Member salaries are adjusted at the beginning of each term to equal 25 percent of a county judge's salary during the first year of the term. Senators whose terms began prior to January 2023 will receive \$41,449 annually. Senators whose terms begin on the first day of the legislative session in January of 2023 and all members of the House will receive \$43,977 annually.