

8/16/2016

Sheila Birnbaum, Chair
NYS Commission on Legislative, Judicial, and Executive Compensation
64 Beaver Street, Box 454
New York, NY 10004

Dear Chairwoman Birnbaum,

I am writing to submit my comments to the Commission for consideration in your final report on Legislative Compensation.

I believe the commission should release its findings ahead of the November 8th general election so that the public has this information before they cast their vote. Something as significant as a pay raise should be given to the public with enough time prior to the election so the public has time to consider the Commission's findings, as it can impact a voter's decision at the ballot box.

Second, I believe that any salary increase should be accompanied with a series of reforms aimed at cleaning up Albany and restoring the public's trust in our State Government. These reforms include eliminating stipends, also known as "lulus", ending the practice of "double-dipping" where elected officials collect their pensions at the same time they are collecting a "part-time" taxpayer funded salary, closing the LLC campaign finance loophole, and making the legislature full-time which means a ban on outside income. As we have seen just in the last year, the leaders in both chambers used their powerful posts to enrich themselves and family members by favoring legislative priorities that benefit wealthy campaign contributors and by steering state contracts to their favored contractor while taking money under the table. In addition, too many unavoidable conflicts arise when a lawmaker is voting on legislation that could have an impact on his or her outside profession. A ban on outside income will eliminate these conflicts.

Lastly, I do not believe that any pay raise should be retroactive. Any pay raise should be prospective so it takes effect after the next general election when the new term commences. This again gives the voters, with the pay raise as consideration, a say when they cast their vote.

Sincerely,



Katie A. Cucco

CC:
Hon. Barry A. Cozier (Ret.)
Roman B. Hedges
Mitra Hormozi
Gary Johnson
Hon. James L. Black (Ret.)
Fran Reiter