

**NEW YORK
STATE
SENATE**

ALBANY, NEW YORK 12247



SENATOR JOSE PERALTA

13TH DISTRICT

**DEMOCRATIC WHIP
RANKING MINORITY MEMBER
ON LABOR**

COMMITTEES:

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CRIME VICTIMS, CRIME
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MEMBER:

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October 11, 2016

New York State Commission on Legislative, Judicial and Executive Compensation
64 Beaver Street
Box 454
New York, New York 10004

Dear Commission Members:

I write to bring your attention to the real need for a change, insofar as the *status quo* that exists in the pay scale for Members of the New York State Legislature.

As you know, Members have not received an increase in their \$79,500 annual pay rate since 1999. Accounting for inflation alone, \$79,500 today holds the same buying power as \$115,000 did in 1999. This represents a significant shift in the standard of living that is experienced by not only ourselves, but the families that many of us also work to support. I simply ask for your recognition that the important decision to engage in public service should not be prohibited solely by a salary level that is insufficient to sustain a Member, and his or her family on annual basis.

This is not a request for a raise. This is merely a request for a proper cost of living adjustment. Furthermore, a suggestion that the cost of living difference between Upstate New York and those residing in the New York City Metropolitan Area negates the need for a pay increase across the Legislature at large is unfounded. This position is refuted by the Executive Branch's own calculation of Location Pay for employees who are based Downstate, an amount that exceeds just \$3,000 per annum.

The correct assessment of a pay increase would thereby account for the federally recognized rise in inflation, as well as the location pay levels established by the Executive Branch.

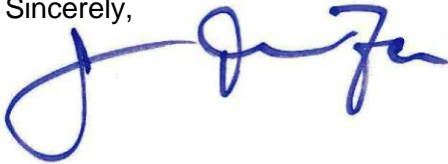
For many elected officials, our work is not carried out on a strictly part-time basis, nor do many of us seek additional income from potentially conflicting employment sources that are outside of our duties in the public service. In my case, the months in the 'Off Session' involve extensive time devoted to servicing my constituents through constant advocacy work and community events that provide valuable services. This year alone, my staff and I have coordinated a wide range of occasions that served to promote interests such as access to school supplies for children, employment assistance through my annual job fair, as well as my annual turkey giveaway at Thanksgiving. I also engage my constituents constantly by personally advocating before City and State agencies on their behalf, as well as walking my District to directly ascertain the issues that are confronted by small business owners.

I strongly encourage you to review the enclosed document that details the efforts undertaken by my office on an annual basis. The day-to-day operations far exceed simply showing up in Albany to vote on pending legislation.

I recognize the importance of issues that continue to be weighed by the Commission, including a determination as to whether the Legislature should be considered to be a full-time or part-time body, as well as the continued lack of ethics reforms that pervade the Election Law and Public Officers Law. I wholly understand the need of the Commission to address these matters and support its work in furthering the public interest. However, at the very minimum I stress the need for the Commission to peg the current salary of Members to the same rate that was decided upon almost twenty years ago, based on a contemplation of inflation rates over the years.

I thank you for your attention to this matter, and stand willing to assist you with your deliberations on the several concerns currently before you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jose Peralta', with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

Jose Peralta
New York State Senator, 13th District