

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE LES GARA

October 13, 2017

State Officers Compensation Commission
c/o Kate Sheehan
P.O. Box 110201 MS-0201
Juneau, AK 99811-0201

Dear Compensation Commission Members:

There has rightly been some public consternation on the issue of legislative Per Diem given the budget cuts that are being spread across the state. I understand you are meeting to consider legislative salaries. You are certainly in a better position to look at this issue than a sitting legislator.

I only offer the following suggestion, which I hope you will consider and that I think the public would appreciate.

I hope the Compensation Commission might offer two alternative salaries. One proposal would come with the contingency that legislators will be paid a salary, but only a Per Diem amount that truly reflects their housing and food costs when they are in Juneau. The current Per Diem amount obviously exceeds those costs.

I assume you will propose, as in the past, a salary that would reflect legislators continuing to receive Per Diem under current rules, which I personally think should be changed.

Speaking for myself, I would personally rather see a salary recommendation the Commission believes is fair, and not have a Per Diem rate that exceeds what my living costs are in Juneau. I have personally declined about 40% of those Per Diem payments this past year, though understand that living away from home is more costly for people with larger families.

I do not have a salary amount in mind. That is delegated to the Commission to recommend.

Still, I do believe it would be useful to see a salary proposal the Commission deems fair, that would be contingent on a more modest Per Diem payment that does not exceed a legislator's reasonable expenses for living away from home during session and special sessions.

Thank you for your consideration.

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE LES GARA

Sincerely,

/*Signature on File*/

Representative Les Gara