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Please accept this copy of an email sent to my senator, Con Bunde, 12/20/08 as my written public testimony for use by the State Officers Compensation Committee in determining future compensation for state legislators.

Dear Con,

I appreciate your interest in making this a very public issue. Unfortunately, when made public the majority of people think that their elected representatives don't deserve to earn any more money than they do, and less considering the recent corruption trials. These same people also can't understand why managers and executives with educations and experience make more money, and they largely resent it. And while these people as a whole can be counted upon to generally vote for what's best for the state and country, we shouldn't have much of a voice in this particular issue except regarding who gets elected. The biggest problem this legislature has is too many uneducated, egotistical members. Group 1 is there because they truly want to give back to the community. Most of the others fit in the earlier category of ego maniacs who crave the attention and couldn't get it any other way (Group 2). Eventually they get jealous of the fact that they're barely able to make ends meet while others that they often help are rich. They start looking for ways to pad their pocket and we end up with a big federal investigation. Then there is Group 3, the wealthy that are usually part of the "of boys club" who love the game (I've been on the periphery of that club for many years—it does exist and until recently it was very powerful), don't need the money, but still want to be part of action. They also eventually might find themselves talking to the FBI. Of course, there's nothing to say that the wealthy aren't a sincere member of Group 1, maybe more than my cynical view would allow me to believe.

Group 1 can always be trusted to do the right thing. The others are suspect. They can't be trusted because they are performing a service for a ridiculously small amount of pay. Eventually, there has to be more in it for them—satisfying their ego only works for so long. And the more times they get re-elected the less they can be trusted. Why else would anyone (other than those few in Group 1) make themselves a public bulls-eye, be second guessed at each turn, be forced to make very difficult billion dollar decisions, maintain two residences, and be separated for months at time from their family...for about the equivalent of minimum wage. By paying this stupid amount of salary to our legislatures we have attracted mostly candidates with little knowledge and business experience, who can be bought for a few thousand dollars, and allow them to make billion dollar decisions for us. This, of course, makes us of all look like fools in the eyes

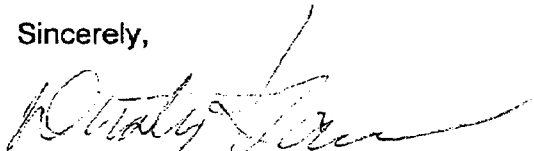
of the rest of the nation. And we deserve it! Yet we continue to turn a blind eye to the root cause: We simply refuse to pay a fair amount for a very high profile job with huge responsibilities. With decent pay we should be able to attract top-notch, trust-worthy citizens to serve.

Now, obviously, I'm generalizing and I have the perception that there are fewer good legislators in Juneau than there really are. But politics is perception. And although I'm no doubt in the minority on this issue I've talked to a number of friends and colleagues about this and most were in general agreement. Although I have to say, their reaction indicated many had never really thought about it.

I suggest you legislators get together, write a public policy statement that says this must be done to prevent the corruption of the past, and to attract more qualified and trust-worthy professionals, and give yourselves a big pay raise. There'll never be a better time than now to fix this mess! So what if some get ripped at the next election cycle for doing what's right? The good ones will get re-elected because I truly believe that the majority of people know in their hearts this is fair and reasonable. I'd also guess that anyone who doesn't back a proposal like this might be wondering what above Group they really belong in.

I believe a reasonable salary for legislators would be in the range of \$100,000 to \$150,000. If this is implemented, with five or six years we'd have one of the most professional state legislatures in the country and the future of the State of Alaska would be much more secure. I am copying this letter to the commission for consideration.

Sincerely,



Dusty Kaser

Cc: Nicki Neal, Secretary to the Commission