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Richard Scherer  
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**TO:** Senate Interim Committee on Elections and Ethics  
**FROM:** Doris Johnson, Chair of the Oregon Public Officials Compensation Commission  
**DATE:** August 8, 2008  
**RE:** Commission Progress Report

The 2007 Legislative Assembly revived the Public Officials Compensation Commission as outlined in ORS 292.907. The Mission of the commission is to build a recommendation for elected officials' salaries, considering:

- Total compensation, including benefits other than salary;
- Salaries for comparable positions in neighboring states;
- Qualifications and skills necessary for each office;
- Level of responsibility;
- Cost of living;
- Budget limits; and
- Any other reasonable and appropriate factor.

The eleven member commission has been meeting for two consecutive days every other week, beginning July 9, 2008. Members of the commission include:

- Two members who have a background in compensation management, appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate (Dawson, Saathoff)
- One member appointed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court (Hemann)
- One member appointed by the President of the Senate (Fredericks)
- One member appointed by the Speaker of the House (Duncan)
- Six members selected by lot from voters rolls by the Secretary of State (CD1 Scherer, Scappoose; CD2 Munkers, Umatilla; CD3 Mehrer, Portland; CD4 Swadener, Eugene; CD5 Dean, Salem; Statewide Johnson, Roseburg)

Activities of the commission include:

- Touring Executive Branch offices;
- Interviewing current and past office-holders to gather information regarding duties, skills and qualifications for each position;
- Reviewing historical data on salaries and benefits for each position;
- Reviewing data for equivalent positions in neighboring states; and
- Reviewing data for equivalent positions in comparable states.

Commission members have discussed policy issues including which states to use as “comparable states” to Oregon, the commission’s goal regarding Oregon salaries related to comparable and neighboring states, and the relationship of salaries to positions in each branch of government.

The State Economist, Tom Potiowsky, provided the commission with state comparisons of population and per capita revenue, expenditure and income. Based on these data, commission members identified nine states that are comparable with Oregon in at least two categories: Iowa, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Wisconsin. Those states, along with Oregon’s four neighboring states (California, Idaho, Nevada and Washington) comprise the list of “comparable” states the Commission has looked at for Executive Branch elected officials. Every state is different, so for each position, the comparable list may or may not apply.

To date, the commission has received and reviewed data on Executive and Judicial Branch positions. At this time, commission members are considering the median salary (including benefits) of comparable states as an initial recommendation for some positions.

With regard to legislator compensation, commission members are aware of the diverse nature of service in legislatures across the country, therefore the Commission is reviewing its options for legislative comparables. We are continuing to review data and ask for your assistance in gathering more first-hand commentary about service in Oregon’s Legislative Assembly and comparable positions.

Through summer and early fall, commission members will continue their deliberation on recommendations for elected officials’ compensation. A public hearing on the recommendations has been scheduled for September 18 and the final commission recommendations will be approved by October 10. Recommendations will be included in the Governor’s Recommended Budget to be considered by the Legislative Assembly next session.

For additional information about commission work, please visit our website <http://pocc.oregon.gov/> Meeting minutes, audio files and handouts are available under “Quick Links.”