

Pay raises for Washington state elected officials finalized for 2023 and 2024



(The Center Square) – A pay boost for all statewide elected officials has been finalized by the Washington Citizens’ Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials.

Under the **salary schedule**, the governor, lieutenant governor, treasurer, superintendent of public instruction, insurance commissioner, commissioner of public lands, and all state legislators would get a 4% cost of living salary increase starting July 1, with another 3% raise going into effect on July 1, 2024.

“State law requires that we base the salaries of the elected officials on realistic standards in order to pay them according to the duties of their office and to attract citizens of the highest quality to public service,” the commission’s mission statement reads.

Gov. Jay Inslee’s salary would increase from \$190,632 a year to \$198,257 a year in 2023, increasing to \$204,205 a year in 2024.

Legislators would see an increase in their annual salary from \$57,876 to \$60,191 in 2023, increasing to \$61,997 in 2024.

Others will see a greater percentage increase in their pay.

Attorney General Bob Ferguson's salary will go from \$175,274 to \$187,543 this year, and \$193,169 in 2024.

State Supreme Court Chief Justice Steven González's salary will go from \$227,410 to \$243,329 this year, increasing to \$255,495 in 2024.

State Auditor Pat McCarthy's salary will go from \$134,526 to \$145,714 this year, increasing to \$150,085 in 2024.

Teri Wright, the commission's executive director, explained the thinking behind the pay hikes.

"Most of the salaries, I would describe as typical, however, some were raised to a higher than typical level to make up for losses over many years," she said in an email to The Center Square. "Most of the elected officials' salaries have not kept pace with Social Security increases or their appointed head counterparts."

The high cost of goods and services is impacting elected state officials, too, Wright pointed out.

"I would say that inflation is part of the reason that elected officials also need a salary increase," she said. "The judiciary, in particular, gave compelling evidence to the commission that their salaries have not kept pace."

Last year, the judiciary requested a 10% salary increase plus annual cost-of-living adjustment to hold ground on previous salary gains and to offset inflation.

Jason Mercier, government reform director at the free market Washington Policy Center think tank, had a little fun with the upcoming pay increases by making a veiled reference online to one of the most iconic moments on “The Oprah Winfrey Show” when the eponymous host carried out a **new car giveaway** to the entire studio audience while yelling, “You get a car!” over and over.

“You get a pay raise, and you get a pay raise, and you get a pay raise – if you're an elected official for state government,” he **tweeted**.

The 17-member **commission** is made up of citizens selected from voter registration rolls. The commission meets every two years and has full authority to set salaries and raises for elected officials.

Neither the governor nor legislators have the power to change the salaries selected by the commissioners.

By:
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