

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY EMPLOYEE POSITIONS AND COMPENSATION

This memorandum provides information on the number of employee positions during the 1995, 1997, and 1999 legislative sessions and reviews options concerning the number of employee positions for the 2001 legislative session. This memorandum also provides information on employee compensation during the 1999 legislative session and suggests compensation levels for the 2001 legislative session. In 1997 a generic "legislative assistant" position was created and replaced the positions of assistant sergeant-at-arms, supply room coordinator, desk page, page and bill book clerk, information desk attendant, telephone attendant, telephone page, parking lot attendant, bill room clerk, and journal room clerk. The purpose of the legislative assistant position is to allow employees in positions not requiring substantial technical skills to be transferred to other work assignments as needed.

Contracting for secretarial services by a third party eliminated stenographer and typist positions starting in 1995, and contracting for bill and journal room services eliminated bill room clerk and journal room clerk positions starting in 1997. Although the tables include telephone attendant positions, those positions would be eliminated if the committee recommends contracting for telephone message services during the 2001 legislative session.

PROPOSED AREAS OF CONSIDERATION

This portion of the memorandum suggests areas for consideration concerning whether current Legislative Assembly employee positions are appropriate for duties assigned to those positions. Each area is listed, followed by the rationale for consideration. The estimated savings under the areas of consideration is for a 70-legislative-day session and is based on proposed 2001 daily compensation for the positions indicated, exclusive of the \$1 per day for previous legislative session employment (up to a maximum additional rate of \$10 per day), and Social Security and workers' compensation contributions:

1. **Reduce the total number of positions in the telephone room from 11 to 9 by eliminating the Senate telephone page position and the House telephone page position.** Telephone call statistics for the telephone room since 1993 show a consistent decline in calls to the telephone room--62,320 calls in 1993; 41,668 in 1995; 28,433 in 1997; and 22,491 in 1999 (which includes 1,302 voice mail messages). At its August 30, 2000, meeting, the committee reviewed this information and recommended that during the 2001 legislative session the telephone room

be staffed by eight telephone attendants and one chief telephone attendant.

Estimated savings from reducing the number of telephone room positions from 11 to 9 (by eliminating the telephone page positions) is \$9,100 (\$65 per day each for 70 legislative days).

2. **Eliminate the chief telephone attendant and eight telephone attendant positions by contracting with a third party to provide telephone message service.** The committee reviewed its efforts at contracting with third parties to provide secretarial services and bill and journal room services and at its August 30, 2000, meeting approved an invitation to bid for telephone message services during the 2001 legislative session. The committee approved a base level of telephone message service of nine telephone attendants, with one of the attendants designated as the onsite supervisor, and authorized the Legislative Council staff to solicit bids for telephone message service on a per day basis for 70 legislative days for the 57th Legislative Assembly.

Estimated cost of providing nine telephone attendant positions in the telephone room during the 2001 legislative session is \$43,736 (\$67 per day for eight attendants and \$80 per day for the chief attendant, for 70 legislative days and one day of training).

3. **Review the need for two information desk attendants.** Beginning in 1993, when there was a substantial number of calls to the telephone room (62,320), telephone calls requesting bill status information were routed to the information desk as a means of transferring some of the workload of the telephone attendants and providing some workload to the information desk attendants. With the reduction in calls since 1993, the information desk attendants no longer receive calls transferred from the telephone room. At its October 5, 2000, meeting, the committee authorized interactive voice response bill status and committee hearing information. As a result, fewer calls for bill status information are anticipated for the telephone attendants, further reducing the possibility of routing such calls to the information desk in the future. As a result, the primary duties of an information desk attendant are showing people how to use the personal computer provided for members of the public to obtain

bill status information, answering general questions, and providing directions to specific rooms or areas. If one information desk attendant is employed rather than two, the position could alternate between the House and the Senate. If the telephone message service is provided by a third-party contractor, the House would lose its "turn" to employ the chief telephone attendant, and the information desk attendant could start the rotation as a House employee.

Estimated savings from reducing the number of information desk attendants from two to one is \$4,615 (\$65 per day for 70 legislative days and one day of training).

4. **Review the need for two parking lot attendants.** Facility Management Division personnel maintain the parking lot, e.g., remove snow. Signs at the ends of the lot notify vehicle operators that the parking spaces are reserved for legislators. Most legislators arrive at similar times, and during floor sessions and committee hearings, there is little movement in the lot. At its July 1, 1999, meeting, the committee received a recommendation by the 1999 secretary of the Senate that one parking lot attendant be employed in 2001, rather than two, because only one attendant was employed near the end of the 1999 legislative session and the parking lot situation worked well. If the

number of parking lot attendants were reduced from two to one, the parking lot attendant could alternate between the houses from session to session. If this position were a Senate employee position in 2001, and the House employed the information desk attendant, there would be two alternating positions in each house--the Senate would employ the supply room coordinator and the parking lot attendant, and the House would employ the payroll clerk and the information desk attendant.

Estimated savings from reducing the number of parking lot attendants from two to one is \$4,550 (\$65 per day for 70 legislative days).

5. **Redesignate the desk reporter as journal reporter.** The desk reporter is responsible for preparing the journal. Duties include recording daily session activity in the daily journal, preparing the journal using the computerized journal reporting system, finalizing the daily journal, and preparing the journal for delivery to the printer.

The total estimated savings of \$18,265 is based on the proposed 2001 compensation levels for 70 legislative days (and includes one training day for all positions except the telephone pages and parking lot attendant). The estimated savings does not include any savings that may result from contracting for telephone message services.

The following table lists employment positions during the 1995, 1997, and 1999 legislative sessions and proposed employment positions for the 2001 legislative session:

EMPLOYMENT POSITIONS - 1995-2001 LEGISLATIVE SESSIONS								
Employee Position	Number of Employees 1995		Number of Employees 1997		Number of Employees 1999		Proposed Number of Employees 2001	
	Session Senate/ House	Total	Session Senate/ House	Total	Session Senate/ House	Total	Session Senate/ House	Total
Secretary of the Senate/Chief Clerk of the House	1/1	2	1/1	2	1/1	2	1/1	2
Assistant secretary/assistant chief clerk	1/1	2	1/1	2	1/1	2	1/1	2
Desk reporter	1/1	2	1/1	2	1/1	2	1/1	2
Calendar clerk	1/1	2	1/1	2	1/1	2	1/1	2
Bill clerk	1/1	2	1/1	2	1/1	2	1/1	2
Sergeant-at-arms	1/1	2	1/1	2	1/1	2	1/1	2
Secretary to the Speaker	0/1	1	0/1	1	0/1	1	0/1	1
Secretary to the majority leader	1/1	2	1/1	2	1/1	2	1/1	2
Staff assistant to the majority leader	1/2 ¹	3	1/2 ²	3	1/1 ³	2	2/2	4
Secretary to the minority leader	1/1	2	1/1	2	1/1	2	1/1	2
Staff assistant to the minority leader	2/2 ¹	4	2/2	4	2/2	4	2/2	4
Chief committee clerk	1/1	2	1/1	2	1/1	2	1/1	2
Appropriations Committee clerk	1/1	2	1/1	2	1/1	2	1/1	2
Assistant Appropriations Committee clerk	1/3	4	1/3	4	1/3	4	1/3	4

Employee Position	Number of Employees 1995		Number of Employees 1997		Number of Employees 1999		Proposed Number of Employees 2001	
	Senate/ House	Total	Senate/ House	Total	Senate/ House	Total	Senate/ House	Total
Committee clerk	10/9 ¹	19	10/10	20	10/10	20	10/10	20
Assistant committee clerk	1/2 ⁴	3	1/2	3	1/1	2	1/1	2
Payroll clerk ⁵	1/0	1	0/1	1	1/0	1	0/1	1
Deputy sergeant-at-arms	1/1	2	1/1	2	1/1	2	1/1	2
Assistant sergeant-at-arms	3/3	6	2/3	5	1/2	3	1/2	3
Supply room coordinator ⁶	0/1	1	1/0	1	0/1	1	1/0	1
Chief page and bill book clerk	1/1	2	1/1	2	1/1	2	1/1	2
Desk page	1/1	2	1/1	2	1/1	2	1/1	2
Page and bill book clerk	5/9	14	3/6	9	2/3	5	2/3	5
Chief telephone attendant ⁷	1/0	1	0/1	1	1/0	1	0/1	1
Telephone attendant	4/4	8	4/4	8	4/4	8	4/4	8
Telephone page	1/1	2	1/1	2	1/1	2	0/0 ⁸	0
Information desk attendant	1/1	2	1/1	2	1/1	2	0/1 ⁹	1
Chief bill and journal room clerk ¹⁰	0/1	1	0/0	0	0/0	0	0/0	0
Bill room clerk	3/3	6	0/0	0	0/0	0	0/0	0
Journal room clerk	3/2	5	0/0	0	0/0	0	0/0	0
Parking lot attendant	1/1	2	1/1	2	1/1	2	1/0 ¹¹	1
Total	51/58	109	41/51	92	40/44³	84	38/44	82

¹ Reflects addition of one staff assistant for each leader, as recommended by the Legislative Management Committee during the 1993-94 interim, rather than assignment of a legislative intern to each caucus.

² Although a total of four staff assistant positions was authorized, the majority leaders employed three staff assistants (recorded in the total as one Senate and two House) and reallocated pay for four positions during the 1997 legislative session.

³ Although a total of four staff assistant positions were authorized, the majority leaders employed two staff assistants (recorded in the total as one Senate and one House) and reallocated pay for four positions during the 1999 legislative session.

⁴ In 1995 the House assigned its chief committee clerk to a committee, rather than employing 10 committee clerks, and increased the number of assistant committee clerks from one to two.

⁵ The payroll clerk is a part-time position that alternates between the House and Senate from session to session.

⁶ The supply room coordinator is a position that alternates between the Senate and House from session to session.

⁷ The chief telephone attendant is one of three positions that alternate between the House and Senate from session to session.

⁸ Reflects the elimination of both telephone pages.

⁹ Reflects the elimination of one information desk attendant, with the remaining attendant being a position that alternates between the House and Senate from session to session.

¹⁰ The chief bill and journal room clerk used to alternate between the House and Senate, but the position was abolished in 1997 when bill and journal room services were provided under contract with a private party.

¹¹ Reflects the elimination of one parking lot attendant, with the remaining attendant being a position that alternates between the Senate and House from session to session.

In summary, the 82 employment positions proposed for the 2001 legislative session reflect two fewer Senate employees and two fewer House employees than during the 1999 legislative session (elimination of two telephone page positions, one information desk attendant position, and one parking lot attendant position). The actual number of authorized positions in 1999 was 86 (84 positions were filled because the majority leaders employed two rather than four assistants). If a third party provides telephone message services, rather than telephone attendants employed by the Legislative Assembly, the number of proposed employment positions would be

reduced to 73--34 Senate employees and 39 House employees.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION

In 1999 employee compensation was generally increased across the board by seven percent. In addition, a skills recognition adjustment was provided for certain legislative session employees to recognize supervisory, technical, and communication skills. The skills recognition adjustments ranged from an additional \$1 to \$11 per day. As a result, compensation ranged from \$62 to \$102 per day (\$7.75 to \$12.75 per hour based on a 40-hour workweek).

The following table illustrates the effect of a five percent average pay increase, rounded to the nearest dollar, for all positions proposed for the 2001 legislative session. The five percent figure is based on the fact that the 56th Legislative Assembly approved average pay increases of two percent for the first year of the biennium and three percent for the second year of the biennium for state employees. In addition, skills recognition adjustments are provided for desk force positions, which increasingly require greater technical abilities than most other employee positions. The Secretary of the Senate and assistant secretary and the Chief Clerk of the House and assistant chief clerk will require additional training on the new voting system. The assistant secretary and assistant chief clerk, desk reporter, calendar clerk, and bill clerk will

require additional training on enhanced computer systems. In addition to compiling the journal, the enhanced journal reporting system gives the desk reporter total responsibility for journal preparation. For the first time, the bill clerk will be trained to operate three different systems. The calendar clerk will assume substantial responsibility, similar to that of the desk reporter, for the accuracy of entries due to the "real time" features of the calendar and its links with the voting system and the LAWS system. The skills recognition adjustments range from an additional \$3 to \$11 per day. As a result of these increases, compensation would range from \$65 to \$109 per day (\$8.13 to \$13.63 per hour based on a 40-hour workweek).

Proposed Number of Employees	Position	Salary Per Position			
		1999 Daily Salary	Five Percent Increase	Skills Recognition Adjustment	2001 Daily Salary
2	Secretary of the Senate/Chief Clerk	\$102	\$5.10	\$2	\$109
2	Assistant secretary/Assistant chief clerk	\$86	\$4.30	\$5	\$95
2	Desk reporter	\$96	\$4.80	\$5	\$106
2	Calendar clerk	\$80	\$4.00	\$11	\$95
2	Bill clerk	\$80	\$4.00	\$6	\$90
2	Sergeant-at-arms	\$80	\$4.00		\$84
1	Secretary to the Speaker	\$80	\$4.00		\$84
2	Secretary to the majority leader	\$94	\$4.70		\$99
4	Staff assistant to the majority leader	\$80	\$4.00		\$84
2	Secretary to the minority leader	\$94	\$4.70		\$99
4	Staff assistant to the minority leader	\$80	\$4.00		\$84
2	Chief committee clerk	\$94	\$4.70		\$99
2	Appropriations Committee clerk	\$94	\$4.70		\$99
4	Assistant Appropriations Committee clerk	\$90	\$4.50		\$95
10	Committee clerk - Three day	\$90	\$4.50		\$95
10	Committee clerk - Two day	\$84	\$4.20		\$88
2	Assistant committee clerk	\$74	\$3.70		\$78
1	Payroll clerk	\$76	\$3.80		\$80
2	Deputy sergeant-at-arms	\$66	\$3.30		\$69
2	Chief page and bill book clerk	\$73	\$3.65		\$77
3	Legislative assistant - Assistant sergeant-at-arms	\$62	\$3.10		\$65
1	Legislative assistant - Supply room coordinator	\$62	\$3.10		\$65
2	Legislative assistant - Desk page	\$62	\$3.10		\$65
5	Legislative assistant - Page and bill book clerk	\$62	\$3.10		\$65
1	Legislative assistant - Information desk attendant	\$62	\$3.10		\$65
1	Legislative assistant - Parking lot attendant	\$62	\$3.10		\$65
1	Chief telephone attendant	\$76	\$3.80		\$80
8	Telephone attendant	\$64	\$3.20		\$67
0	Legislative assistant - Telephone page	\$62	\$3.10		\$65
82					

The 1999 concurrent resolution setting compensation levels also provided for additional compensation of \$1 per day per session worked, up to a maximum of \$10 per day. During the 1999 legislative session, one Senate employee received an additional \$9 per day. The remaining Senate employees received from \$0 to \$4 per day. One House employee received an additional \$10 per day, one received an additional \$8 per day, and one received an additional \$7 per day. The remaining House employees received from \$0 to \$6 per day.

North Dakota Century Code Section 54-03-10 requires the compensation of Legislative Assembly employees to be set by concurrent resolution. In 1999 the concurrent resolution establishing employee positions did not include specific names or identify specific individuals. This avoided special action to hire an employee after adoption of the resolution. By designating positions rather than naming employees, a report by an Employment Committee that names an employee is sufficient to identify that employee, the position, and the compensation level. The concurrent

resolution establishing employee positions also has authorized the Employment Committees to convert full-time positions to part-time positions, as appropriate, and has provided for a generic position of "legislative assistant" for employees not requiring technical skills so those employees can be transferred to work assignments as needed. In 2001 the legislative assistant position will cover positions formerly classified as assistant sergeant-at-arms, supply room coordinator,

desk page, page and bill book clerk, information desk attendant, parking lot attendant, and telephone page. Telephone attendants are not included in the definition of legislative assistant due to a compensation level above the "entry" level of legislative assistants.

The estimated cost of the proposed compensation adjustments is \$389 per day, which totals \$27,230 for 70 legislative days not including Social Security and workers' compensation contributions.