

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6017

AS OF JANUARY 17, 1994

Brief Description: Revising provisions relating to compensation of local officials.

SPONSORS: Senators Winsley and Haugen

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Staff: Eugene Green (786-7405)

Hearing Dates: January 19, 1994

BACKGROUND:

Levels of compensation for most elected officials are established by statute. For their own members, city and town governing bodies have been authorized to fix their own compensation since statehood.

The Constitution was amended in 1971 to allow county legislative authorities to establish compensation for county elected officials, rather than having those amounts fixed in statute. In 1973, county legislative authorities were authorized to establish salaries for their own members, but could not reduce them below amounts in effect on January 1, 1973.

Two different levels of monthly salaries are in effect for port district commissioners with gross operating revenues above certain amounts. However, the commission of any port district may set compensation for its members which is different from the statutory amounts.

Specific salaries are set for the first mayor and councilmembers of a newly incorporated code city until they can be compensated under a formal ordinance. The statute also allows these councilmembers to increased their salaries during their current terms. It specifies that such interim action is not to be construed as fixing the members' own salaries. On the other hand, Article 11, Sec. 8 of the state Constitution prohibits ANY local elected governing body that fixes salaries for its own members from increasing those salaries during a current term of office.

Many local governments have adopted ordinances or resolutions that tie periodic salary increases to a standard indicator of inflation.

SUMMARY:

Ordinances that establish compensation for the mayor and members of a city governing body, for a county legislative authority, and for a port commission may be (1) set in discrete dollar amounts for each year of the statutory term or (2) referenced to established measures of economic activity which cannot be affected by the governmental unit. "Established measure of economic activity" is defined to mean published, recurring indices of performance of the local economy.

The establishment of compensation for a county legislative authority is not to be construed as affecting any county home rule charter provision relating to the salary of a county executive.

The interim authority is deleted for councilmembers of a newly incorporated code city to increase their own salaries until a compensation ordinance can be passed.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: none requested