

**Summary of Results of Legislator Survey  
Part 1 - Legislator Compensation and Expenses**

- Q1.** Number of responses: 113 of 149  
Response rate: 75.8%
- Q2.** Senators = 36  
Representatives = 77
- Q3.** Urban = 34%  
Suburban = 17%  
Rural = 49%
- Q4.** District comprised of one county = 68%  
District comprised of 2-3 counties = 17%  
District comprised of 4 or more counties = 15%
- Q5.** 73% of legislators on an interim or administrative committee  
27% of legislators not on an interim or administrative committee
- Q6.** 28% of legislators, this was their first interim  
55% of legislators, this was their 2nd and 4th interim  
17% of legislators, they had 5 or more interims as a legislator.
- Q7.** As a legislator during the interim, how much time, on average, do you spend each month directly on constituent issues?  
**n=98 (70 answers able to be calculated)**  
**Range: less than 1 hour to 100+ hours**  
**Mode (answered most often): 20 to 40 hours**  
**Median (point at which 50% above and below): 20 to 40 hours**  
(the number in parentheses required interpretation on my part, but follows majority of answers)
- less than 1 hour to 4 hours 3
  - 5 to 7 hours 4
  - 8 to 19 hours 19 (26)
  - 20 to 40 hours 31 (34)
  - 41-50 hours 5
  - 51-60 hours 3
  - 61 to 100 hours 4
  - 100+ 1 (2)

**Comments:**

- 25 hours a month, mostly on the telephone
- It averages about 50% of my time. Some months a little more - some months a little less.
- I spend about 40 hours a month on constituent issues. Some are questions or requests

via phone call or email, or by face-to-face contact from constituents; other constituent issues are those raised at meetings of groups that I attend.

- I bet I spend 5-10 hours a week on constituent issues and meetings as my district is the biggest unincorporated area/town in the state. There are lots of issues with growth that they are experiencing at this time. From fire, school, water & sewer, steering committee meetings to other issues in the area. I try to be present to all public meetings regarding my district so it does take a lot of time, which is unpaid.
- I'll answer it this way because hours is hard to guess. So far in February I have had six days (plus 2 more for interim) in which I had a constituent meeting or event of some sort. In January, it was 10 days (arguable 12). That does not include phone calls, which I would estimate add another 2-4 hours per month.

**Q8.** As a legislator during the interim, how much of your own money on average, do you spend each month on postage?

**n=97 (92 answers able to be calculated)**

**Range: none to \$500**

**Mode: None, not much.**

**Median: Between less than \$5 to \$10**

• Not much, minimum, very little, negligible, none	25
• less than \$5 to \$5	21
• \$5 to \$10	17
• \$5 to \$15	8
• \$10-\$20	9
• \$25- \$35	5
• \$30-\$40	1
• \$50	2
• \$85	1
• \$100	2
• \$200	1
• \$300-\$500	1

**Comments:**

- Most of the cost is related to large mailings. When you add those into the average it is about \$85.00 (included in tally).
- Very little, we have email in the 21st century.
- I do most over the internet and by phone.
- Minimal with email.
- Never actively involved in interim.
- I don't send out postage. I used online and send updates online and to the local newspapers to inform my constituents as either I have to pay for it otherwise.
- I send very little mail because I don't want to spend the money. I have purchased a box of 500 envelopes to go along with my state-paid letterhead. And I have purchased one roll of 100 stamps so far. Sometimes I bring my postcards to Helena and use the code for Legislature to send in the state mail. But this isn't a very timely way to communicate because I can only do it when I'm in Helena.

- I have a constituent account to cover such expenses.

**Q9.** How much of your own money (unreimbursed), on average, do you spend each month on gas or diesel for miles driven for legislative duties in the interim?

**n= 98 (94 answers able to be calculated)**

**Range: none to \$500**

**Mode: single answer \$50\* and \$100^ tied at 10 each (majority between \$40 and \$200)**

**Median: \$50**

- 0 to <\$10 11
- \$10 to \$50 36\*
- \$50 to \$100 17^
- \$100 - \$150 8
- \$150 - \$200 8
- \$200 - \$300 4
- \$250 - \$350 6
- \$400 - \$500 2

**Comments:**

- Very few comments: one answer was that they do not track this; 3 legislators answered in miles (50, 50-75, 200 a month); never actively involved in interim; constituent account...I don't need to do much driving to cover my district; the last two interims, I've had a constituent services account to cover most of those expenses.

**Q10.** How much of your own money (unreimbursed), on average, do you spend as a legislator during the interim each month on phone, computer, and internet (not included in IT technology allowance)?

**n= 96 (82 answers able to be calculated)**

**Range: none to \$1,400**

**Mode: \$10-\$49 (\$24 average amount)**

**Median: Between \$50 and \$70 per month**

- none, minimal, 0 10
- < \$10 3
- \$10-\$49 19 (\$24 average amount)
- \$50 - \$70 12
- \$75 2
- \$100-\$125 17
- \$150-175 2
- \$200 2
- \$250-260 3
- \$300 1
- \$300-400 1
- \$1400 1

**Comments:**

- Roughly 1 hour a day.
- I do not track this, but at a guess, 10% at least of my phone, computer and internet are related to legislative work. Much higher on printer costs - most of my printing is legislative work. Guess: \$20 (included in tally).
- None, it's too hard to calculate how much of my home internet is attributable to legislative work vs. all else.
- Hard to estimate, do not separate from personal IT expense.
- I pay for a phone, computer & internet and can't break out a cost for legislative vs. personal use.
- Approximately 1/4 of my monthly cell phone bill is attributable to legislative matters. This amounts to about \$50 a month (included in tally).
- I [sic] my personal computer so it is not that much.
- About \$200 (included in tally). Is there a reimbursement for phone/online service at our homes? I thought the technology allowance was for a valid computer purchase every four years for the session.
- I had to up my personal cell plan by \$40/month. I have internet already for \$70/month (not included in tally).
- All ready have that expense.
- Never actively involved in interim.
- I use the computer and copier where I work. But if I had to pay, it would be significant, maybe \$200 per month (included in tally).
- This is hard to gauge as I use my own personal phone and take calls from constituents but I would guess I spend about 5 hours a month talking to constituents about the issues and the area a month.
- Well I use my personal internet connection and phone line for constituent work. That bill is \$89 per month. I use my personal cell phone for constituent work. That bill is \$85 per month. You'd have to prorate those figures but I couldn't do any of that communicating at all without my personal accounts.
- Don't keep track.
- I have never done a line item account of phone and computer expenses...just use what I have here at home.
- Not much over basic monthly charges.
- My phone/Internet is about \$110/month - not including cell phone. As I live outside of cell service, I spend about \$100 during the session for a pay as you go cell plan (neither amount included in tally). Of course, not all of my phone/Internet is related to the legislature. I switched phone plans with Blackfoot Telephone and now get 500 minutes of free long distance/mo. This was handy as I no longer pay long distance to talk to my Lewis and Clark County constituents.

**Q11.** How much of your own money (unreimbursed), on average, do you spend each month as a legislator during the interim on meals and lodging for legislative work?

**n= 95 (89 answers able to be calculated)**

**Range: none to \$400**

**Mode: \$100 - \$150**

**Median: Between \$50 and \$60 per month**

- |             |    |
|-------------|----|
| 0           | 15 |
| \$10-\$40   | 21 |
| \$50-85     | 20 |
| \$100-\$150 | 22 |
| \$200-\$250 | 10 |
| \$400       | 1  |

**Comments:**

- Maybe 4-5 nights lodging over the 20 months of the interim; same for meals but a person has to eat regardless of what "business" one is doing.
- Meetings are inconsistent (more in the summer months), but for the conferences or meetings I choose to attend on my own dime, it probably averages to \$150/month. It might be better to "budget" this quarterly.
- Never actively involved in interim.
- If I have to go a local meeting, may be 90 miles away, I pay for the meal and gas. Last year I went to a meeting about 150 miles one way and came back the same day.
- Usually there are meetings that I attend during the lunch time. For example, I attended a lunch meeting last week to hear about a CSK water compact, I paid for my own lunch. However, doesn't happen a lot though as other times lunch is provided.
- Don't keep track.
- Again, prior to opening my campaign account I used my constituent account or was reimbursed.

**Q12.** As a legislator, do you attend any community council or neighborhood taskforces? If you do, please list below the types of council(s) or taskforces(s) and the frequency you attend meetings as a legislator.

**n= 88 (52 answers able to be calculated)**  
**Range: none to 6-8 meetings/week**  
**Mode: 2-4/month**  
**Median: Between 1-2/month and 2-4/month**

- The kinds of meetings and gatherings mentioned were local, regional, and state organizations, i.e. city and county commissions, rural water and sewer districts, fire and weed districts, chamber, union, library task forces, TIF, community forums, school boards, neighborhood task forces, urban renewal districts, neighborhood councils and associations, Community Councils, advisory councils, hospitals and health care, non-profit meetings, private sector, housing development, school community relations, school superintendents, agency on aging, economic development, tribal meetings, economic development and partnership, assisted living, mental health, federal land and FWP, ag, stockgrowers, wool growers, sage grouse, hunger and other advocacy.

**Q13.** Do you have any other unreimbursed expenses in your work as a legislator during the interim? Please list and explain.

**n= 68 (4 major answers in one of categories below)**  
**Mode: Time (13 answers)**

- Registration/attendance/dues/salary 5
- Printing/photo copies 5 (2 mention \$10/month)
- Time 13
- Vehicle maintenance, depreciation 4

**Comments:**

- Single answers on childcare, clothing, thank you cards/postage, parking, office supplies/rent, care for animals/home.
- Social clubs mtg.
- Just doing what we are elected to do and what my constituents expect. County commissioner meetings, D.C. trip at my own expense, Helena meetings that involve all of us even though not on certain committees.
- I do not record, but consistently travel this large district for meetings.
- These figures do not include campaigning.
- Local constituent groups - \$300-\$400 (?)
- I do not need to be reimbursed. I understood what I was getting into when I ran.
- Most of my expenses are not reimbursed.
- Would do more, but really can't justify the cost of travel, I have a large district.
- I attend many events that are sponsored by businesses, organizations, GFC-MSU, etc., so that I can understand more about issues of the state. I limit myself to those that take place in Great Falls, so other than my time, they do not cost me anything.
- Time, gas, phone minutes, wear and tear on pickup are the main ones.

**Registration/attendance/dues/salary**

- Registration fees for some meetings, Optional attendance at NCSL, PNWER, ALEC, all on my own dime or partially reimbursed by the presenting organization
- I've attended NCSL and CSG conferences at my own expense, and Women in Government conferences at partially-paid expense. The networking with other legislators, especially from neighboring states whose policies affect Montana, is incredibly valuable; I just cannot afford (monetarily) to attend each year or each interim, but these are really, really valuable events.
- I belong to a number of organizations that I must pay dues to. These organizations are important to know issues in many diverse areas. I would belong to more if some compensation were given. I would attend many more outside meetings if some reimbursement were given. I think the way to handle this issue would be to give each legislator some amount of money a year or over two years to spend. I also believe that this money should have receipts or mileage claims submitted.
- Only one continuing education type thing is paid for. I would love to attend NCSL and CSG and any other kind of educational thing I could attend. I do spend a lot of time writing to constituents about issues and publishing newspaper columns. I do not get paid for that. I accept that.

**Time**

- Time answering correspondence and writing support letters for many, many grants for counties, organizations, etc., time spent on phone.
- In addition to constituent issues, I spend probably 1-2 days working on legislation,

interim committee business, and informational meetings.

- Time keeping up on the issues and needs that we will address as lawmakers.
- I meet frequently with other legislators in the area, often for lunch or coffee.
- Time - Outside of the Capitol I am not reimbursed for any of the time I spend working with constituents and community members.
- I spend time and money meeting with potential candidates. I attend national meetings with only partial reimbursement.
- Reimbursement for time worked away from normal job. Time chatting on phone. My time is the big cost. Like many legislators, when I am gone from my home, I usually pay someone to take care of my animals and watch my home.
- For each constituent event, taskforce meeting, economic development meeting, etc., I have to take time off of work. So it is a matter of calculating lost time in my business. This also includes time spent for attending legislative appointment meetings; for instance, I am an appointed member of the WICHE. When I attend WICHE meetings, they pay for my travel and lodging, but I lose two days of income and do not get paid my legislative salary. Same goes with attending other conferences. For instance attending the NCSL Education Chairs conference. That was three days of lost wages and no legislative salary to compensate.
- Time with press/conferences/panels/local events include tickets, travel, food that are rarely compensated. Meetings with other legislators and locals also cost meals, and take time.
- Time away from paid work.

#### **Vehicle maintenance, depreciation**

- Fuel expense is just part of the cost. Vehicle maintenance and replacement cost along with tires would be considered in the cost of travel. You could wear a vehicle out as a legislator especially in district that are large. A one-time meeting for myself at the other end of my district requires a round trip of 180 miles. The time on the phone and computer preparing for travel is also time consuming and I estimate I spend 100 hours per month. I am a legislator that is very engaged with the public and the issues so I may spend too much time on legislative activity but I believe my duty to Montana and the citizens as a legislator is very important. I do not believe a legislator can or should be compensated for every little expense incurred. To serve Montana in many ways is compensation in itself.
- New tires, oil changes, and vehicle service averages about \$2,000/year.
- Depreciation on my vehicles, my district is 282 miles of the 545 miles of the Canadian-US border. I drive over 40,000 miles a year.