

A Study of Other Legislatures

Legislator Compensation and A Legislator Job Description and Classification

TABLE 1

Legislatures in Several Western States

State	Reg. Session Days (Max) in Biennium	Calendar or Leg. Day	Daily Rate	Average Annual Rate	Appx. Pay in Biennium for Reg. Sessions	Appx. Pay per Sess. Day for Biennium
Montana	90	L	\$ 82.64		\$ 7,438	\$ 82.64
Alaska	242	C		\$ 50,400	\$ 100,800	\$ 416.53
Nevada	120	C	\$ 146.29		\$ 17,555	\$ 146.29
New Mexico	90	C	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
North Dakota	80	L	\$ 162.00		\$ 12,960	\$ 162.00
Oregon*	NA	NA		\$ 22,248	\$ 44,496	NA
South Dakota	80	L		\$ 6,000	\$ 12,000	\$ 150.00
Utah	90	C	\$ 273.00		\$ 24,570	\$ 273.00
Wyoming	60	L	\$ 150.00		\$ 9,000	\$ 150.00
Average w/o NM	108.9	NA	\$ 162.79	\$ 26,216	\$ 28,602	\$ 197.21
Average w/ NM	106.5	NA	\$ 135.66	\$ 19,662	\$ 25,575	\$ 155.27

* Oregon excluded from columns that show "NA".

TABLE 2

2010 Constituents Per State Legislative District Table

State	Total Legislative Seats	2010 Resident Population	Senate Seats	Average Constituents Per Senate District	House Seats	Average Constituents Per House District
Alaska	60	710,231	20	35,512	40	17,756
Montana	150	989,415	50	19,788	100	9,894
Nevada	63	2,700,551	21	128,598	42	64,299
North Dakota*	147	672,591	49	13,726	98	13,726
Oregon	90	3,831,074	30	127,702	60	63,851
South Dakota*	105	814,180	35	23,262	70	23,262
Utah	104	2,763,885	29	95,306	75	36,852
Wyoming	90	563,626	30	18,788	60	9,394

* All house districts are two-member districts.

In states with mixed multi-member districts, district population is for single-member districts.

TABLE 3
Legislatures in Several Western States

State	Wages/Salary			Mileage
	Hourly	Daily*	Annual**	
Montana	\$10.33	\$82.64	\$21,486	\$ 0.55
Alaska	\$24.23	\$193.85	\$50,400	\$ 0.56
Nevada	\$18.29	\$146.29	\$38,035	\$ 0.56
New Mexico	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$ 0.56
North Dakota***	\$8.84	\$70.75	\$18,396	\$ 0.56
Oregon ^	\$10.70	\$85.57	\$22,248	\$ 0.56
South Dakota	\$2.88	\$23.08	\$6,000	\$ 0.37
Utah	\$34.13	\$273.00	\$70,980	\$ 0.51
Wyoming	\$18.75	\$150.00	\$4,500	\$ 0.55
Averages w/o NM	\$16.02	\$128.15	\$29,006	\$ 0.528
Averages w/ NM	\$14.24	\$113.91	\$25,783	\$ 0.531

Unshaded cells are reported amounts.

Shaded cells are imputed amounts.

* A daily rate is imputed by dividing an annual rate by 2,080 hrs and multiplying by 8 hrs.

** An annual rate is imputed by dividing a daily rate by 8 hours and multiplying by 2,080 hours.

*** ND legislators receive \$453/mo and \$162/calendar day during session. The 2013 Session was scheduled over 119 calendar days. Legislators also receive \$162/day for non-session days whenever working on legislative business.

^ OR legislators are paid \$1,854/month.

TABLE 4

Land Area of Montana Legislative Districts

Senate	
Land Area in Sq. Mi.	No. of Districts
<20	9
20-100	7
100-1000	7
1000-5000	13
5000-10000	8
10000+	3

House	
Land Area in Sq. Mi.	No. of Districts
<10	18
11 - 50	23
50 - 100	5
100 - 1000	19
1000-2000	7
2000-5000	18
5000-10000	9
10000+	1

TABLE 5

Other forms of compensation* provided to legislators, not including session compensation, in seven similar states.

State	Other compensation	Phone allowance	Leadership
Alaska	Senators \$20,000/yr or \$10,000/yr Representatives \$16,000/yr or \$8,000/yr for postage, stationery, and other legislative expenses.	Yes, for official state business only.	\$500/yr Senate and Presiding Officer
Oregon	For interim periods, legislators receive \$16,476 per biennium. They also receive an additional \$450-\$750 a month as a district allowance depending on the geographic size of district.	Yes, state-provided office and district office phone for legislative business only.	Senate President additional \$21,612/year salary House Speaker – additional \$21,936/year salary
Nevada	None	\$2,800 communications allowance, \$60 postage.	\$900 Senate and House Presiding Officers, Majority/Minority
North Dakota	None	Only Legislative Council members or chairs of interim committees.	Senate and House, Presiding Officer - none Senate majority/minority leaders ~\$300/month House majority/minority ~ \$270/month
South Dakota	None	\$600/6 months for legislators and \$900/6 months for leadership.	None
Utah	None	No	\$3,000 Senate and House Presiding Officers \$2,000 majority/minority
Wyoming	Up to \$750/quarter through the constituent services allowance.	Telephone credit card for official business only with a \$2,000 limit during 2 years.	\$978/month interim Senate and House Presiding Officers \$600/month majority/minority

*Health insurance and retirement benefits vary in each state. Some form of state-paid (full or partial) health insurance is provided in Alaska, Montana, North Dakota, Oregon, and Utah; not available in New Mexico, South Dakota, or Wyoming; optional at legislator's expense in Nevada. Retirement benefits are provided as follows: optional with employee contribution in Alaska, Montana, and Oregon; mandatory (allows withdrawal at will) with employee contribution in Nevada; mandatory with no contribution in Utah; none in North Dakota, South Dakota, or Wyoming. Retirement with employee contribution is the only form of compensation in New Mexico.

APPENDIX

MONTANA LEGISLATIVE JOB DESCRIPTION

TITLE: Legislator
DIVISION: Montana Legislative Branch

JOB SUMMARY:

Identifies, considers, advocates for and against and casts vote for and against public policy alternatives. Develops and shares expertise in various public policy areas. Requests the drafting of, sponsors, and votes on legislation, resolutions, and amendments. Attends and participates in countless committee and subcommittee meetings and in meetings with constituents and citizens in general, government officials including elected officials, lobbyists, other stakeholders, and legislative staff. Is responsible for debating and acting to help establish or revise public policy, but has little to no authority to ensure either enactment or efficient, effective implementation. Has limited job security, essentially working on a 2-year or 4-year "contract" with voters. Typical education and experience includes at least graduation from high school and 5 years increasingly responsible experience or Bachelor's degree and 1 year of experience. However, there is no minimum level of education or experience required.

ASSIGNED DUTIES AND TASKS:

- Requests, sponsors, and votes on bills, resolutions, and amendments. Works with committee members, agency representatives, bill sponsors, and staff to clarify the purposes of amendments and write amendments responsive to their concerns. May serve as the primary point of contact for a committee or caucus in an assigned public policy area.
- Investigates public policy issues individually, through committees, and through relationships with other legislators, constituents, legislative staff, agency staff, other stakeholders and citizens, and various information sources. Through public hearings and private conversations, participates in careful and systematic analysis of public policy issues. Draws logical conclusions from information gathered, documents presented or read, and the research conducted and makes legislative decisions for making, changing, and implementing public policy.
- Becomes and remains informed about subjects of interest to the legislator and the legislator's constituents, committees, and caucus. Becomes and remains informed on technical matters, including legislative processes, rules, and procedures. Works closely with staff and stakeholders to facilitate timely and efficient legislative work.
- Orally presents policy goals and objectives in the form of legislation, including amendments. Participates in policy debate, including assertive promotion of and opposition to public policy options. Discusses the results of research and other work to committees and other groups. Makes logical and understandable arguments for and against various policy options. Such arguments may be planned or extemporaneous and include posing and answering questions in a direct and responsive manner.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES:

- Basic knowledge of the Montana Legislature; legislative process, rules, and procedures; and state government.
- Basic knowledge of Montana history, geography, economics, and demographics.
- Basic knowledge of the purposes and structures of state, local, and federal governments.

- Basic knowledge of negotiation.
- Ability to understand statutes, codes, court decisions, and research materials.
- Ability to write and speak clearly, concisely, and in a well-organized manner.
- Ability to act professionally and diplomatically, including communicating effectively and diplomatically with other legislators, professionals and citizens participating in the legislative process, agency and industry stakeholders, and legislative staff.
- Ability to work independently, manage a heavy workload and a variety of projects in a timely manner.
- Ability to maintain confidentiality and handle politically sensitive work.
- Ability to develop networks of professional and personal contacts to support legislative work.
- Ability to adapt to a biennial cycle and transition to different rules and activities between sessions and interims.
- Ability to adapt to changing needs of other legislators, constituents, staff, and other stakeholders and to work with a wide range of personalities and work styles.

WORK RELATIONSHIPS/PERSONAL CONTACTS:

A Legislator may and must be able to interact with other legislators, constituents, various elected officials, legislative employees, directors and employees in the Executive Branch of local, state, tribal, and federal governments, employees, judges, justices in the Judicial Branch, and lobbyists, media, and members of the public.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

A Legislator may be asked to report to legislative leaders, but ultimately is not accountable to anyone other than voters.

WORKING CONDITIONS:

A Legislator, while in Session, works in an ordinary office environment that is generally open to the public. During legislative interims especially, a legislator may also attend local/district functions in a variety of venues, which may be conducted in ordinary or extraordinary venues outside of regular business hours. A Legislator will work long hours (10-12 hour days are not uncommon) during legislative sessions. Some travel will be involved. A Legislator works in a biennial cycle with approximately 2-6 months of campaigning in alternate years, 14 months of interim committee and constituent work, and 4-5 months in regular legislative session. Special sessions of varying, usually brief, duration occur infrequently but are mandatory. Interim and session assignments vary at the discretion of the appointing authority (Speaker or Committee on Committees).

QUALIFICATIONS:

The qualifications are constitutional and statutory

- A legislator must be 18 years of age or older and must meet the registration and residence requirements provided by law.
- A candidate for the legislature must have been a resident of the state for at least 1 year prior to the general election. For 6 months prior to the general election, a legislator must have been a resident of the county if it contains one or more districts or of the district if it contains all or parts of more than one county.

Exceptions

- A person may not be a legislator if the person is: (1) serving a sentence for a felony and has not been finally discharged from state supervision; or (2) is of unsound mind, as determined by a court.

CLASSIFICATION GUIDELINES:

Upon being sworn in, a Legislator may have very little to extensive knowledge or understanding of the Legislature, its function and role, or its procedures or rules or of the function or role of an individual legislator. Each term, session, and interim that a Legislator serves typically represents a corresponding increase in the level of experience, knowledge, skill, and responsibility. A Legislator may gain responsibility, reliability, and authority through training, experience, and demonstrated proficiency in conducting legislative business. Legislative experience typically allows a Legislator to accomplish more in the legislative arena and to communicate more effectively within that arena.

Legislator

- Participates in careful, accurate, systematic, and patient study of public policy questions.
- Reads and understands bills, amendments, reports, and summaries.
- Makes prepared and extemporaneous oral presentations, including asking and answering questions..
- Develops a basic understanding of Montana legislative processes, rules, and procedures and of state government.
- Distinguishes among a range of options for dealing with public policy issues.
- Develops knowledge of subject matter of interest to the legislator and within the purview of committee assignments.
- Acts professionally and diplomatically.
- Establishes and cultivates personal and professional contacts in subject areas related to the legislator's areas of interest and within the purview of committee assignments.
- Participates as a member of committees or subcommittees and a caucus. May serve as a committee or subcommittee chair or vice chair.

Position: Legislator
Classification Level: 7*

Work is conceptual/ theoretical in nature, and covers a range of topics in which data are typically subject to interpretation, are extensive and diverse, and in which relationships are ambiguous and undeveloped (i.e. public policy issues). Coordinating segmented efforts to achieve cohesive approaches is characteristic of the work (working with staff, public, other legislators). Assignments are diverse and non-recurring and may involve testing the soundness of concepts or standards or developing standards and parameters that determine policy or new approaches in a professional field (Bill Drafts). Typical tasks include devising and evaluating concepts for approaches to new policies. Work requires professional knowledge, skill, and ability sufficient to independently apply existing and accepted practices, rules, laws, and policies, distinguishing among a range of options for dealing with public policy issues.

*Minimum qualifications in regard to education and experience was not used to determine classification level.

Comparable band ranges for Executive and Legislative Branches (not actual salaries)

Executive Branch Band 7
Min = \$40,315 (\$19.38/hr)
Max = \$178,672
Mid = \$109,493 (\$52.64/hr)

Legislative Branch Band 7 Wage Ranges
Min = \$49,359 (\$23.73/hr)
Max = \$107,254
Mid = \$78,306 (\$35.24/hr)

In 1999, the legislator pay was amended from a Grade 8, entry salary of \$7.46 an hour, to Grade 10, entry salary of \$8.86 an hour. If the inflation factor is applied to those salaries for the equivalent in 2014, an entry salary of a Grade 10 would be \$12.49. The current salary of \$10.33 an hour is less than the equivalent of the inflation factor applied to the entry salary for Grade 8 of \$10.51.

In 2007, when the state fully converted to a broadband pay system, \$10.33 an hour was the Grade 10 entry salary amount. If inflation is applied for 2014, the entry salary amount would be \$11.65 an hour.

For comparison, the Legislative Branch Occupational Wage Ranges (2012) for Band 3 range from \$11.85 an hour to \$14.10 an hour, averaging \$13.03 an hour.

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