

July 21, 2025

Municipality of Anchorage  
Salaries and Emoluments Commission

Dear Salaries and Emoluments Commissioners:

We are writing to request that you do a cost-of-living adjustment for Anchorage Assembly salaries to bring them in line with inflation, as you did for the Anchorage School Board last year. Your improvement of Assembly Member health care plans this year was a huge step toward achieving equity of pay and benefits for Assembly Members, but now the salaries are once again lagging far behind peer compensation.

The compensation for Assembly Members was last updated in November 2019 and set the Chair's salary to \$67,204.80 and Members' salary to \$60,008.00, starting in 2021. Accounting for inflation since 2019,<sup>1</sup> that is \$83,994 for the Chair and \$75,000 for members in 2025 dollars, a 25% difference.

For comparison, in 2024, the salary for Alaska State legislators increased from \$50,800 in 2022 to \$84,000 in 2024 (they also receive roughly \$37,000 in per diem a year).<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, legislators represent fewer constituents (a house district is about 18,000 people and an Assembly district is about 48,000 people), have more staff to assist, and are in session for a shorter part of the year.

The work of an Assembly Member is full-time work that requires a high level of communication and organizational skills, a strong understanding of municipal and state law, and knowledge of a wide range of local issues, from Port infrastructure and building codes to homelessness and public health. Yet the salary is commensurate with an entry to mid-level Municipality of Anchorage employee.

Fewer and fewer people are running for Assembly, and in recent years, several seats have gone virtually uncontested. We can only surmise why fewer people are interested, but the low pay for a large workload certainly is a contributing factor. If we don't make the pay more competitive, fewer people will want to serve and we'll be left with a body of Members who are not prepared for the complexities of the job.

We urge you to work to implement this change this year to improve the pay for Assembly Members before the next election. Thank you for your service to our city. We are so grateful.

Sincerely,

Pete Petersen, Anchorage Assembly, District 5, 2014-2023

Austin Quinn Davidson, Anchorage Assembly, District 3, 2018-2023, Assembly Chair, 2020;  
Acting Mayor, 2020-2021

Forrest Dunbar, Anchorage Assembly, District 5, 2016-2023, Assembly Chair 2018 and 2020

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation\\_calculator.htm](https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.adn.com/politics/alaska-legislature/2023/05/16/alaska-legislature-fails-to-block-pay-raises-for-lawmakers-governor-and-cabinet/>