



KANSAS LEGISLATIVE DIVISION *of* POST AUDIT

The Rundown podcast transcript for a Special Study titled: **Salary, Compensation, and Allowance Comparison** – Released October 2019

Brad Hoff, Host and Recruiting and Training Manager: [00:00]

From the Kansas Legislative Division of Post Audit, this is The Rundown, your source for news and updates from LPA including performance audits recently released to the Kansas legislature. I'm Brad Hoff. In October 2019, Legislative Post Audit released a report that compared the salaries, compensation and allowances paid to legislators, elected state officers and judges in Kansas to those in other states. I'm with Daria Milakhina, Audit Methodologist at Legislative Post Audit who worked on this comparison study. Daria, welcome to The Rundown and thanks for taking the time to discuss the report findings with me.

Daria Milakhina, Audit Methodologist and Supervisor: [00:45]

Glad to be here, Brad.

Brad Hoff, Host and Recruiting and Training Manager: [00:47]

So before we discuss the report's findings, talk a little bit about what makes this report different than traditional performance audits.

Daria Milakhina, Audit Methodologist and Supervisor: [00:56]

We received this study in a different way from how we usually get our audits, which are requested by the Legislative Post Audit committee. This study came to us as a request from a 2019 conference committee report in our budget proviso. And because it wasn't a regular audit, we were not under an obligation to follow our regular performance auditing standards. However, we made sure that the quality is still to that standard.

Brad Hoff, Host and Recruiting and Training Manager: [01:31]

Now the report was pretty data-driven. Give us a sense of what type of data you analyzed and the source of this data.

Daria Milakhina, Audit Methodologist and Supervisor: [01:41]

We used publicly available data from several different sources. For legislators, we used data from the National Conference of State Legislatures. For elected officials that was [the] Council of State Governments data and for judges, the data came from [the] National Center of State Courts. And what we did with this data is to be able to compare it better between states. We made several adjustments for cost of living and for legislators for the length of the session to make sure that we're basically comparing apples to apples.

Brad Hoff, Host and Recruiting and Training Manager: [02:26]

Now the budget proviso required LPA to look at the salaries, compensation and allowances paid to legislators, elected state officers and judges in Kansas compared to those in other states. So, walk us through the types of analyses that you conducted for each of these groups.

Daria Milakhina, Audit Methodologist and Supervisor: [02:49]

Well, let's start with legislators. Legislator's pay is very complex and have several components. On top of that, the legislature structure is different for different states. So, to do the analysis, we first had to pick a sample of the states that are similar to Kansas and Kansas according to the NCSL classification is a part-time state. So, it would be like nine other part-time states to compare Kansas to those states. In addition, we'll also compare Kansas to neighboring states. However, neighboring states are based on the same classifications-hybrid states. That means that on average, legislators spend a little bit more time doing legislature work throughout the year and also have slightly larger staff. As I said, the legislature pay is very complex. It usually has several components. There is a base pay and per diem. There's also compensation for mileage, staff, and office off session, which I'll get back in a little bit. So, most of the states have this base pay and per diem, which is combined together. That would be the legislator's salary throughout the year. The base pay for Kansas, it depends on the number of days in session, and for other states, it's usually a fixed salary. So, what I did was I took the average session length in Kansas for the last about 20 years, starting from 2000 and that would be 92 days. And based on that session length, I calculated salaries for all the states. So as if legislators from other states work that average Kansas session length that gave me the base salary for Kansas, one number and also this in the same manner I calculated the per diem, which for all the states it will depends on the session length and that would be the amount that legislators get paid to partly cover the costs for their lodging and meals during the session and combined that together. I've got the number that would represent the base salary for legislators, adjusted for cost of living and compared those numbers between the states. As I mentioned, legislators are also compensated for mileage and sometimes office and supplies off session. We did not make the comparison using those numbers because for miles, most of the states, the compensation for miles is just based off the federal rate. So, it is very similar and it just depends how far the legislator lives from the capitol. And for offices

it's just very different among the states and it's really hard to make a fair comparison.

Brad Hoff, Host and Recruiting and Training Manager: [06:05]

What about the elected state officers?

Daria Milakhina, Audit Methodologist and Supervisor: [06:09]

For elected officials, things are much simpler. They usually get just the salary and there are no other additional compensation. So, I just took the salaries that are publicly available for elected officials that are elected in Kansas. That would be Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General, Treasurer and Insurance Commissioner. I adjusted those salaries for cost of living and just compared between all the states.

Brad Hoff, Host and Recruiting and Training Manager: [06:42]

And finally talk about the judges salary data.

Daria Milakhina, Audit Methodologist and Supervisor: [06:46]

So data for judges is similar to elected officials. It's pretty straight forward. It's just a salary and it's also available, in the public sources. So, I adjusted it...our cost of living for most of the judges position. The only difference is for magistrate judges. We used a report that was done by National Center for State Courts for Kansas where they looked at the states that have similar position as magistrate judges, but took that sample of states and used the salary for magistrate judges or similar positions. Sometimes they're not called that way-to compare that to Kansas, again, adjusting for cost of living,

Brad Hoff, Host and Recruiting and Training Manager: [07:38]

What are the main takeaways of this report?

Daria Milakhina, Audit Methodologist and Supervisor: [07:42]

So for legislator's pay in Kansas falls somewhat in the middle for the states that are also part-time, similar to Kansas, and for the neighboring states it's lower than most of the states, neighboring states, that we looked at for other positions. For elected officials and for judges, except magistrate judges, Kansas pay is lower than most of the states and magistrate judges are somewhat in the middle for the sample of states that we looked at. However, our report also has graphs that shows the distribution of the salaries among other states and how Kansas falls into this distribution. So, I encourage you to go and look at those graphs because they provide more in-depth information of how salaries compare.

Brad Hoff, Host and Recruiting and Training Manager: [08:37]

Daria Milakhina is an Audit Methodologist at Legislative Post Audit. She completed a report that compared the salaries, compensation and allowances paid to legislators, elected state officers and judges in Kansas to those in other states. Daria, thank you

for taking the time to walk me through this study.

Daria Milakhina, Audit Methodologist and Supervisor: [08:54]

Thank you, Brad.

Brad Hoff, Host and Recruiting and Training Manager: [08:56]

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