

ment), title "Merit System", providing that no forfeiture of automatic increases in compensation paid to State employees shall occur without the approval of the State Commissioner of Personnel.

SECTION 1. *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Maryland,* That Section 27 of Article 64A of the Annotated Code of Maryland (1954 Supplement), title "Merit System", be and it is hereby repealed and re-enacted, with amendments, to read as follows:

27. (a) The State Employees' Standard Salary Board shall formulate rules and regulations for the administration of Sections 24-27, which shall include provisions for automatic increases, from minimum to maximum, of the rates established by the schedule, except that said Board shall have the power to establish flat or fixed salaries and wage rates for special classifications or cases, (for a period not to exceed two years) where, upon the recommendation of the State [Employment] Commissioner of Personnel and in the discretion of said Board, provision for automatic increases are deemed inadvisable; and such rules shall, after approval by the Governor, have the force of law in the same manner as other conditions herein prescribed. Said Board shall have the power and authority at any time to increase or decrease any rates of pay for all employees in the Classified and in the Unclassified Service, and said increased or decreased rates of pay shall, after approval by the Governor, apply to all employees in the classification or classifications so affected, including incumbent employees and new employees.

(b) *Subject to the approval of the State Commissioner of Personnel, and not otherwise,* [T] the automatic increases in salary rates provided for hereinabove in this section shall not apply in the instances specified in this sub-section, and no such increase or increases over an existing salary shall be paid to any person if:

(1) The probation period for such person shall have been extended for a longer period than six months, pursuant to the provisions of Section 29 of this Article, during the period of the extended probation; or

(2) The person has been suspended for disciplinary purposes, pursuant to the provisions of Section 31 of this Article, during the period of one year from the time of suspension; or

(3) The appointing authority for the position involved has recommended [ , and the Commissioner has approved, ] that the person not receive the automatic increase in any year because of his unusual or excessive rate of absenteeism, inefficiency, or other substantial reason affecting adversely his value as an employee. An appointing authority who exercises the power conferred by this paragraph for a second time as to the same person shall immediately thereafter file charges for his permanent removal from the classified service, acting generally pursuant to the provisions of Section 29 of this Article, with further proceedings to be had thereunder.

(c) Any person who is denied an increase in salary under the provisions of paragraph (2) of sub-section (b) hereinabove shall have a right of appeal to the Commissioner, who shall have the power to determine whether the suspension and resulting denial of an increase were justified and the further power to change or modify