

they also receive an additional \$35 per diem compensation for attending Legislative Council meetings or subcommittees thereof plus expenses.\* The average total compensation (salary and Legislative Council per diem, excluding expense reimbursement per diem) received by members at the 1970 General Assembly session, including the preceding Legislative Council session, was \$3,122; with per diem expense reimbursement added on, the average total amount was \$4,872.

All of these statistics with respect to the existing system of compensation have been carefully considered by the Commission in view of the language of Article III, Section 15(5) of the Constitution, which states:

“In no event shall the compensation and allowances be less than they were prior to the ratification of this Constitutional Amendment.”

Legislative leaders and State government officials who either testified before the Commission or responded to our letter mailed to all legislators varied in their detailed recommendations, but they generally agreed that the present compensation is low in relation to (1) legislative and constituent responsibilities and (2) actual hours committed to completing those responsibilities. Their recommendations ranged from \$10,000 to \$25,000.

The Commission believes that a \$2,400 annual salary is inappropriate for General Assembly service in the 1970s. The traditional concept of a “citizen legislature” (wherein, in contrast to the United States Congress, members serve during a limited length session and have other employment) is being challenged more each year by the volume and complexity of problems facing a State assembly. This Commission believes that Maryland is in a transitional stage and that it should move in the direction of more professionalism in the administration and procedures of the General Assembly. Although this transition has not brought the Legislature to a full-time “professional” branch of government,\*\* we believe that an \$11,000 salary is realistic because of (1) the increased demands upon legislators’ time by year-round duties on the Legislative Council and in committee, (2) the increased complexity and volume of business transacted each year by the General Assembly, and (3) the trend toward increased professionalism in the management and functioning of this branch of Maryland government.

This Commission cannot overemphasize the continuing need in this State for highly motivated and competent citizens to serve in the General Assembly. While salary is not and should not be the major motivation for any public service, inadequate compensation can be a factor in discouraging able men and women from seeking election to the legislature and in many cases making it impossible for them to serve. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that the allowable compensation be at least such an amount as will make it possible for able men and women with strong motivation for public service to render such service in the General Assembly. It is particularly important because it is to the able and conscientious young men and women of today that the State must look for the leadership of tomorrow and, yet, it is on just such young people that the financial

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\* The actual total compensation and expense reimbursement has been as high as \$9,096, in at least one case.

\*\* It has come to the attention of the Commission that a small number of Legislators hold salaried positions with the State of Maryland or with political subdivisions of the State, presumably receiving a leave of absence from such employment during the legislative session. The Commission believes that such practice should be discontinued and urges the General Assembly to give consideration to this recommendation, particularly in light of the increased compensation recommended in the resolution.