

**ADMINIS-  
TRATIVE  
POLICY**



**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
JOINT RULES COMMITTEE**

**MEMORANDUM**

To: Pam Varni, Executive Director  
Legislative Affairs Agency

Skiff Lobaugh, Human Resources Manager  
Legislative Affairs Agency

From: Senator John Cowdery,  
Senate Rules Chairman

Representative Norman Rokeberg  
House Rules Chairman

Date: May 8, 2005

Subject: Implementation of New Employment Policy Effective July 1, 2005

Attached is a copy of the new Legislative Employee Employment Policy. This policy amends the policy adopted in 1988. The key amendments are:

- ✓ Two new professional level job classes were created. Their titles are Professional Assistant and Finance Assistant.
- ✓ There is a new job class grouping will be ranges 24, 23, and 22. The job classes in this grouping will be the Professional Assistant, Finance Assistant, Senate Secretary, and Chief Clerk.
- ✓ The Lounge Supervisor has had a title change to Legislative Chef, and the ranges will be increased to 17, 18, and 19. Time served as a Lounge Supervisor will count together for step placement. However, when counting time for other job classes in the job class grouping the time at a range 17 will not count for the range 18 and 19 range grouping.
- ✓ The Lounge Attendant job class has been increased to 12, 13, and 14. Time served as a Lounge Attendant will count together for step placement. However, when counting time for other job classes in the job class grouping the time at a range 12 will not count for the range 13, 14 and 15 range grouping.
- ✓ A new job class of Lounge Assistant has been added with the ranges 14, 15, and 16. Time served as a Lounge Assistant will count together for step placement. However, when counting time for other job classes in the job class grouping the time at a range 14 and 15 will not count for the range 16 and 17 range grouping.
- ✓ The Page job class has been increased to ranges 10, 11, and 12.

There are special instructions regarding implementation of this policy. These special instructions are to safeguard the intentions of the Joint Rules Committees and are as follows:

*Employees active on the payroll on June 30, 2005, if placed at a higher range by this policy, will retain their step in the higher range as if the step were earned. (Example: Employee at a range 19 step E promoted by this policy on July 1, 2005 to a range 21 will be granted E step as if it were earned. They would only need two more legislative sessions of at least 100 days each, or one full year with the Legislator at a comparable level or higher to advance to F step). On July 1, 2005, it is the intention of the Rules*

*Chairmen and the Presiding Officers to allow two additional ranges to existing staffing allotment to all legislators. In addition, legislators in leadership positions will be allowed an additional one range for a total of three ranges to their existing staffing allotment. The additional ranges will be authorized by either the Presiding Officer or the appropriate Finance Co-Chairmen. (Example: A legislator has a staffing allotment on June 30, 2005 of one range 15 and one range 19 for a total of 34 ranges staffing allotment or July 1, 2005 that legislator will have a total starting allotment of 36 ranges). If at any other time after July 1, 2005 an employee is hired or promoted their step placement will follow the normal step placement procedures. They will be given at least a one step increase and, if that places the employee above A step, they will be at that step until they earn it.*

To implement these instructions here are some guidelines on situations that may occur.

- ✓ For an employee to qualify for these special implementation instructions they must be active on the payroll on Thursday, June 30, 2005, AND be moved to the new position on Friday, July 1, 2005.
- ✓ An employee is promoted from a range 19 C to the range 22 they will be placed in the range 22 at a step C. This means that they will have earned C step in the range 22, 23, and 24 range grouping. If this employee is later dropped to the range 21/20 job class grouping, even if they have not served any time there, their lowest step placement will be C.
- ✓ An employee in the above scenario leaves the payroll (either separation or layoff) after July 1, 2005 and returns any time in the future that this employment policy is in affect will be placed back at the C step.
- ✓ When an employee receives promotion and one time step placement on July 1, 2005, their merit anniversary date will not change. Meaning if an employee at range 21, step C, with a merit anniversary date of 12/16/2005, is promoted to a range 23, they will be placed at step C with the merit anniversary date of 12/16/2005.
- ✓ If at any other time after July 1, 2005 an employee is hired or promoted their step placement will follow the normal step placement procedures. They will be given at least a one step increase and, if that places the employee above A step, they will be at that step until they earn it.
- ✓ An employee on layoff status, separated, or on leave with out pay on June 30, 2005 will not qualify for these implementation instructions.
- ✓ Each legislator's office will be given two ranges for him or her to distribute amongst their staffing allotment how they see fit. In addition to the two ranges, legislators in leadership offices will be given one more range for a total of three ranges.
- ✓ All legislators will need to forward their request for increased staffing allotment to the appropriate Presiding Officer or Finance Committee Co-Chairmen for approval before the Personnel Office can process the necessary payroll actions.

If you have any questions regarding implementation of this policy please feel free to contact either Rules Committee Office.

cc: Senator Ben Stevens, Senate President  
Representative John Harris, Speaker of the House

EMPLOYMENT POLICY  
SENATE/HOUSE LEGISLATIVE EMPLOYEES  
Effective Date: [JULY 1, 1988] July 1, 2005  
Amends Employment Policy adopted by  
Senate-House Joint Journal Supplement, 3/22/88, No. 17

This Policy governs the employment of those legislative employees under the authority of the Senate or House Rules Committees during the legislative session and under the authority of the Senate President or Speaker of the House during the interim. These employees include staff to individual Legislators, staff to standing and special committees, the staffs of the Senate Secretary's and Chief Clerk's Offices and those employees under the direct supervision of the Rules Committees, i.e. employees in the Legislative Lounge and the staffs of the Sergeant at Arms.

This policy does not apply to employees hired under AS 24.10.210.

These Senate/House legislative employees are to be hired under the following provisions:

Within the budget constraints, the Rules Committee Chairmen [CHAIRMEN] during session and the President and Speaker during interim will determine the number of employees and at what pay ranges each of the individual Legislators and Committee Chairmen will be authorized to hire and for what period of time.

Within the budget constraints, the House and Senate Finance Committee Co-Chairmen will determine the number of pay ranges each of the individual Legislator on the Finance Committee will be authorized to hire from the Finance Committee budget, and for what period of time.

Employees will be selected by and serve at the pleasure of the individual Legislator.

No employees will be put on the payroll above a range 24.

Each chamber is allowed a maximum of nine (9) leadership staff, which includes the leadership staff of the Finance Co-Chairs.

The individual Legislator will submit a request for the authorization to hire to their respective Rules Chairman during session and to the Senate President or Speaker of the House as appropriate during interim or the Finance Committee Co-Chairmen as appropriate. The authorization to hire will be forwarded to the LAA Personnel Office. At that time, the employee will be able to complete the necessary paperwork and be put on the payroll.

SALARY SCHEDULE

<u>Position</u>	<u>Range</u>
<u>Professional Assistant</u>	<u>24, 23, 22</u>
<u>Finance Assistant</u>	
Senate Secretary/Chief Clerk	[22, 21]
Legislative Assistant	21, 20
Administrative Assistant	19, 18
Assistant Senate Secretary	
Assistant Chief Clerk	
Sergeant-at-Arms	

[ENROLLING CLERK [ENGROSSING CLERK]	18, 17]
<u>Legislative Chef</u>	<u>17, 18, 19</u>
Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms Researcher [LOUNGE SUPERVISOR]	17, 16
<u>Lounge Assistant</u>	<u>14, 15, 16</u>
[MACHINE OPERATOR] Legislative Secretary	15, 14, 13
<u>Lounge Attendant</u>	<u>12, 13, 14</u>
Clerk [LOUNGE ATTENDANT] <u>Page</u>	12, 11, 10
[PAGE] Messenger	10, 9

#### Benefits

Except as provided for hourly employees, all employees will be paid on a monthly basis on the salary schedule in effect for classified and partially exempt State employees. (Sec AS 39.27.011(a).)

NOTE: No commitment for the continuation of employment is to be assumed. Employees serve at the pleasure of their respective supervisor and upon the authorization of the appropriate authority.

Employees do not receive a geographic pay differential, either during session or interim.

All monthly paid employees receive full medical, retirement and leave benefits. Monthly paid employees do not receive compensatory time or overtime and are on call 7 days per week.

[EMPLOYEES ARE NOT COMPENSATED FOR TRANSPORTATION OR MOVING EXPENSES TO OR FROM A REGULAR SESSION OF THE LEGISLATURE.]

Hourly pay based on the current salary schedule will also be available for short-term employment. Hourly employees may receive retirement benefits.

#### LONGEVITY

Longevity is awarded on the 16th of the month following an employee's eligibility. Longevity increases are determined according to the following:

- Step A - no prior legislative experience
- Step B - Two legislative sessions of at least 100 days each, or one full year with the Legislator at a comparable level or higher.
- Step C - Four legislative sessions of at least 100 days each, or one full year with the Legislator at a comparable level or higher.

- Step D - Six legislative sessions of at least 100 days each, or one full year with the Legislator at a comparable level or higher.
- Step E - Eight legislative sessions of at least 100 days each, or one full year with the Legislator at a comparable level or higher.
- Step F - Ten legislative sessions of at least 100 days each, or one full year with the Legislator at a comparable level or higher.

[STEPS J - M WILL BE GRANTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH AS 39.27.022]

- Step J - Fourteen legislative sessions of at least 100 days each, or two full years with the legislature at a comparable or higher level.**
- Step K - Eighteen legislative sessions of at least 100 days each, or two full years with the legislature at a comparable or higher level.**
- Step L - Twenty-eight legislative sessions of at least 100 days each, or five full years with the legislature at a comparable or higher level.**
- Step M - Thirty-six legislative sessions of at least 100 days each, or four full years with the legislature at a comparable or higher level.**

comparable level of service is defined as work performed in a position with similar duties and responsibilities under the following guideline:

**Range 24, 23, 22**  
 Ranges 21, 20  
 Ranges 19, 18  
 Ranges 17, 16  
 Ranges 15, 14, 13  
 Ranges 12, 11, 10, 9

When promoted to a position with a higher range that is not comparable, step placement above Step A may be granted in order that the employee receive, in effect, a one-step increase. Subsequent longevity steps may be granted upon completion of additional qualifying experience.

Those employees who would not be eligible under the revised Policy for the step, which they are currently being paid, will retain that step until they would be eligible for the next step under the revised Policy.

#### Leave

Legislative employees are subject to the statutes regarding the accrual and use of personal leave. All employees who receive leave benefits accrue leave at a rate based on their prior service in the positions with leave benefits. The Legislative Affairs Agency Personnel Office should be notified by the supervisor when an employee is absent either in a memorandum or with submission of a leave slip. Leave slips should be completed by the employee, signed by the employee's supervisor and submitted to LAA Personnel immediately upon the employee's return to work.

Employees accrue leave time on the following basis:

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| 2 days (15 hours)        | for each full monthly pay period for employees with 0-2 years of service in a leave accruing position. |
| 2.25 days (16.875 hours) | for each full monthly pay period for employees with 2-5 years of service in a leave accruing position. |

- 2.5 days (18.75 hours) for each full monthly pay period for employees with 5-10 years of service in a leave accruing positions.
- 3 days (22.5 hours) for each full monthly pay period for employees with 10 or more years of service in a leave accruing position.

This Policy is effective [JULY 1, 1988] July 1, 2005.

In order for an employee to qualify for the below one-time exception they must:

- (a) be active on the payroll on Thursday, June 30, 2005, AND
- (b) be moved to the new position on Friday, July 1, 2005.

ONE TIME EXCEPTION: [THOSE CURRENT EMPLOYEES WHO WOULD QUALIFY UNDER THE REVISED EMPLOYMENT POLICY FOR A LONGEVITY STEP INCREASE JANUARY 16, 1988 ARE AUTHORIZED TO RECEIVE THE INCREASE RETROACTIVE TO THAT DATE.] Employees active on the payroll on June 30, 2005, if placed at a higher range by this policy, will retain their step in the higher range as if the step were earned. (Example: Employee at a range 19 step E promoted by this policy on July 1, 2005 to a range 21 will be granted E step as if it were earned. They would only need two more legislative sessions of at least 100 days each, or one full year with the Legislator at a comparable level or higher to advance to F step). On July 1, 2005, it is the intention of the Rules Chairmen and the Presiding Officers to allow two additional ranges to existing staffing allotment to all legislators. In addition, legislators in leadership positions will be allowed an additional one range for a total of three ranges to their existing staffing allotment. The additional ranges will be authorized by either the Presiding Officer or the appropriate Finance Co-Chairmen. (Example: A legislator has a staffing allotment on June 30, 2005 of one range 15 and one range 19 for a total of 34 ranges staffing allotment, on July 1, 2005 that legislator will have a total starting allotment of 36 ranges). If at any other time after July 1, 2005 an employee is hired or promoted their step placement will follow the normal step placement procedures. They will be given at least a one step increase and, if that places the employee above A step, they will be at that step until they earn it.



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Representative John Harris, Speaker of the House

## REASONABLE PAY INCREASES FOR LEGISLATIVE STAFF

### ***PAY INCREASE ACROSS THE BOARD IS LONG OVERDUE***

- Cost of Living Index shows that the annual cost of living in Alaska has risen over 42% between 1988 and 2004
- Yet 1988 is the last time a pay increase was authorized for staff—that's 17 years ago
- "Step" increases amount to around 1 ½ percent increases either each year or every two years, which works out to roughly one-half the general inflation rate
- Many years ago, we actually reduced the annual "step" increases to less than half what they are for the rest of State employees. A typical annual increase will result in 1 to 2 percent increases in pay, giving legislative employees the lowest of all state employee pay increases
- Thus, rather than reward staff for staying on the job, they do not even break even; they are actually penalized for each year they remain on the job
- There are dedicated people coming back to Juneau this session who in real dollars, actually earn a lot less than they did when they started working for us over ten or more years ago; of course, there aren't many, but they demonstrate the basic inequity that currently exists
- Historically, the Legislature has unfairly stagnated or reduced staff compensation levels to balance its own internal budget; in an effort to keep political pressure at bay, we have essentially balanced our budgets on the backs of our own staff people, who have no champion to fight for anything more
- Legislative staff are fully exempt and have no organized labor bargaining power; they are purely "at-will" employees, meaning they can be terminated at any time for no reason at all
- According to the Legislative Employee Handbook, staff are also required to be available for work 24 hours a day, seven days a week—which often occurs during a busy legislative session. Other state employees are specifically obligated only until 4:30 p.m. five days a week
- Unlike legislators, who are free to pursue businesses and professions most of the year, staff are required to work full-time for the State, and thus have little or no opportunity for additional work opportunities
- In addition, staff are in the unique position of not knowing every two or four years whether they will have a job after the next election cycle

- Many are also pressured into a tremendous amount of unpaid, "volunteer" campaign work for their employers, unlike other state employees
- Few people would believe that we actually require our staff to leave family and friends behind annually; secure second homes and bills; travel to and from a capital city a thousand miles away—all with their own money, without a penny of reimbursement from the State—despite the individual legislators receiving daily tax-free per diem payments and full moving and frequent back-and-forth travel reimbursement. Staff share the identical expenses as legislators and yet receive nothing to offset the costs. In fact, the State is currently defending a class action lawsuit on this very point of inequity.
- Thus, when travel to and from Juneau—together with additional housing and living expenditures—is factored in, our staff people actually make a lot less than their salaries would indicate—that's all real money, out of families' pockets that is never repaid by us
- Governor's office has staff members (who came from the ranks of legislative staff) making over \$90,000 annually

#### ***INABILITY TO KEEP QUALIFIED PROFESSIONALS ON THE JOB***

- The Legislature has become a temporary stopping ground for transient, 20-something staffers who cannot afford to work there for long
- As a result, very few educated, experienced professionals remain working for the Legislature, and instead take their experience and look for work in other government offices
- The turnover rate is substantial, and a disproportionate number of inexperienced staff people come to Juneau every year
- This despite the fact that the Legislature makes all state policy and passes all state laws, a tremendous and weighty responsibility
- The quality of work in the Legislative branch has suffered accordingly
- It is imperative that we retain a core group of experienced, professional staff people by becoming competitive with our compensation structure
- At a minimum, we should make pay for our core professional staff competitive enough to keep them from looking for work in the Governor's office or in other state agencies, where pay rates can be much higher