

Statement of Fran Reiter, Member of the New York State Commission on Legislative, Judicial and Executive Compensation

For the record, September 22, 2016.

The New York State Commission on Legislative, Judicial, and Executive Compensation (Commission), of which I am a member, has been charged with examining, evaluating, and making recommendations with respect to salary adjustments for members of the judiciary, the legislature, and certain executive officers. To that end, we have engaged in numerous public hearings and done substantial research, first with regard to the judiciary. At those hearings, we heard from a number of witnesses representing the judiciary, in person and via written submissions, who, individually and collectively, presented a substantive case for the salary increases the Commission ultimately recommended.

The events surrounding our investigation of potential legislative salary increases have been very different.

This is likely the last scheduled hearing before this commission makes its final recommendation. To date, we have heard from only three legislators, one of whom testified *in support of a salary cut*. We have neither heard nor received written testimony from the leadership of either the Assembly or Senate, making an institutional argument for a salary increase.

During the time of these hearings, it appears that more legislators are making public statements against the raise than for it, and some legislators are actually saying they won't accept it. Then why would this commission ever recommend it? At the same time, public sentiment via testimony and written submissions has been unanimous in its rejection of *any* legislative salary increase. Based on all we have heard, it is my opinion there is no possible justification for this commission to recommend any legislative pay raise whatsoever.

Therefore, I am requesting that we reach out, formally, to the leadership and members of the NYS Assembly and Senate and invite them to provide the input so sorely lacking from our deliberations. Among the base issues that need to be addressed if we are to consider a pay raise:

- Do you believe the annual salaries and/or allowances of members of the legislature warrant an increase? If so, why and how much?
- To what extent should lulus, and travel expenses be considered?

If the legislators will participate, we should schedule an additional public hearing at which they can be heard and answer the Commission's questions, before we reconvene to determine our final recommendation. Absent the willingness of the legislature to contribute meaningful insight for our consideration, I do not see how the Commission has the basis on which to counter the overwhelming public sentiment objecting to such increases.

cc: Members of the Commission on Legislative, Judicial and Executive Compensation
Governor Andrew Cuomo
Senator John Flanagan, New York State Senate
Speaker Carl Heastie, New York State Assembly