

# State puts brakes on taxpayer-funded cars for legislators

By Jim Sanders and Torey Van Oot, Sacramento Bee

BURBANK – California legislators no longer will receive a car, gas and maintenance paid largely by taxpayers.

The state's independent compensation commission voted Thursday to replace the existing program in December with a \$300 monthly allowance to defray legislators' costs of driving their personal vehicles.

Commissioner Chuck Murray, who was replaced as chairman Wednesday night, noted that California is the only state to provide all lawmakers with a vehicle of their choice. The program is overly generous, he said.

"We feel the pendulum has swung too far to the left, and we're trying to bring it back to the middle," Murray said. "The way they reimburse for cars went out in the private sector eight to 10 years ago."

Switching to a set car allowance, costing about \$432,000 annually, would cut the state's current expense for legislative cars roughly in half, according to Commissioner John Stites II, who pushed the idea.

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