

California lawmakers' salaries highest in nation

By Jim Sanders, Sacramento Bee

Salaries for California lawmakers remain the nation's highest despite years of budget crisis and a belt-tightening backlash that sparked legislative pay cuts three years ago.

For voters eager to target lawmakers as scapegoats for the state's massive problems, California's top ranking is sure to fuel debate this week over whether to cut deeper into legislative paychecks.

State-by-state pay statistics will be weighed Friday by the state's California Citizens Compensation Commission, a seven-member panel appointed by the governor to set pay for legislators and other statewide elected officials.

Salaries don't tell the whole story. California's \$95,291-per-year legislative pay does not reflect other cuts made to compensation in the past three years, including stripping lawmakers of cars and slashing their payments for Sacramento living expenses from \$173 to \$142 a day.

California clearly leads the nation in legislative base pay, followed by Pennsylvania, \$82,026, and New York, \$79,500.

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