

Lawmakers give staff raises while cutting pay for other state workers

By Patrick McGreevy and Michael J. Mishak, Los Angeles Times

SACRAMENTO – Lawmakers gave raises worth \$4.6 million annually to more than 1,000 of their aides before cutting the pay of most other state workers, newly released records show.

The lawmakers said they were trying to make up for several years without staff pay increases.

“Modest adjustments based on individual performance were appropriate,” after pay and hiring freezes during the previous four years, Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg, D-Sacramento, said in a statement.

But the raises, at least 10 percent for some top staffers in the last 11 months, have been disclosed at an awkward time for Steinberg and his fellow Democrats, who control the Legislature. They are gearing up to help Gov. Jerry Brown to convince the public that the state is desperate for money in the aftermath of a deep recession and should pass billions of dollars in tax hikes in November.

Opponents of the governor’s tax plan wasted no time in painting the Democrats as hypocrites.

“It’s an outrage that they did this when the governor is asking voters to approve a tax initiative because he says we can’t pay our bills,” said Lew Uhler, head of the California-based National Tax Limitation Committee.

And state workers hit with a 4.62 percent pay cut to help balance California’s budget were enraged by news of the raises.

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