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**REPORT OF THE COMMISSION  
TO STUDY SALARY LEVELS OF  
NEW YORK CITY ELECTED OFFICIALS**

July, 1983

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SUMMARY

On May 27, 1983, the Commission to Study Salary Levels of New York City Elected Officials (the Commission), composed of five private citizens, was appointed by Mayor Koch to examine the Compensation levels of New York City elected officials and to recommend changes in those compensation levels if warranted. In the intervening weeks, the Commission conducted a study, held a public hearing and makes the findings summarized below.

The overriding impression of the Commission, after studying the responsibilities of the city's elected officials, is that governing the City of New York is a task of enormous complexity and that the salary levels of its elected officials should be raised to recognize the magnitude of their duties. The Commission arrived at this conclusion after considering numerous factors, all of which support higher pay levels.

The problem, of course, extends beyond the question of appropriate compensation for the city's top elected officials. The Mayor's salary effectively serves as a cap on the rates paid to all employees covered under the city's pay structure. Unrealistically low salaries for the top elected officials create problems of salary compression

which make it impossible to distinguish adequately between the contributions at different levels of management throughout the municipal organization.

This is further aggravated by the fact that salary adjustments are made to most levels of municipal employees on an annual basis, while a change to the elected officials' salaries has, of late, been occurring only as the result of a special Commission established periodically to review the city's elected officials' salaries.

Four years have elapsed since the last formal review. Since July 1979, inflation has continued to erode real income with the Consumer Price Index for New York City increasing by approximately 38.5% projected through the end of 1983. Other key indices have also increased from 40 to 50% during this time.

Also, the additional compensation paid for the four major City Council leadership positions has not changed since 1970. During the last 13 years, the activity of the City Council and the demands on its leadership have increased tremendously.

As a result of these findings, the Commission makes the following recommendations.

First, we recommend that the salaries of the Mayor, President of City Council, Comptroller, Borough Presidents and City Council members be increased effective July 1, 1983 as follows:

	<u>Current Salary</u>	<u>Recommended Increase</u>	<u>Recommended Salary Effective 7/1/83</u>
Mayor	\$80,000	\$30,000	\$110,000
President of City Council	66,000	24,000	90,000
Comptroller	66,000	24,000	90,000
Borough Presidents	61,000	19,000	80,000
City Council Members	35,000	12,500	47,500

The recommended adjustments for these officials would total \$610,500 annually. Given the savings of \$350,000 from the recent elimination of 10 Council seats, the net cost would be \$260,500.

Second, we recommend that the additional compensation for leadership positions be increased effective July 1, 1983 as shown:

	<u>Current Additive</u>	<u>Recommended Increase</u>	<u>Recommended New Additive</u>
Majority Leader and Vice Chairman	\$19,500	\$10,500	\$30,000
Minority Leader*	13,000	7,000	20,000
Chairman of Finance Committee	9,000	5,000	14,000
Chairman of General Welfare Committee*	7,000	3,500	10,500

\*Vacant Position

Third, after reviewing the facts surrounding the compensation of District Attorneys and pending legislation in that respect, we believe that it would be inappropriate to make specific salary recommendations at this time. However, in view of the burdens faced by this office, the Commission urges the Mayor to make recommendations to the City Council for increases in salaries of District Attorneys at the earliest possible date. The recommendations should include limitations preventing the addition of changes authorized by the City to those which may be authorized by the State.

Fourth, we again recommend that a mechanism be established to ensure the consistent and periodic review of elected officials' salaries. The Commission thinks that this will help to avoid the problems created by the current long time spans between reviews. Prominent among these are the inevitable salary compression between the officials and their subordinates and the seemingly large individual increases which must be given when there is a lag time of four or more years between adjustments.

II

Origin and Membership of the Commission

The Commission was convened on May 27, 1983 by Mayor Edward I. Koch. It was asked to "examine the compensation levels" for the Mayor, City Council President, Comptroller, Borough Presidents, and Members of the City Council, and to recommend changes in those compensation levels, if warranted.

On June 15, 1983, the Commission was subsequently requested by the Mayor to review the compensation paid to District Attorneys within the five counties of the City of New York.

The Commission members are:

Chairman Richard R. Shinn, former Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company.

Kenneth S. Axelson, former Executive Vice-President of J.C. Penney Company, Inc. and former Deputy Mayor for Finance.

Robert R. Douglass, Executive Vice-President and Secretary of the Board of the Chase Manhattan Bank and former Counsel to Governor Rockefeller.

Jewell Jackson McCabe, President of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women and management consultant to government and private industry.

Irma Vidal Santaella, an attorney and an accountant and founder and President of 100 Hispanic Women.

The Commission assembled a staff of compensation experts to assist in gathering and analyzing various pertinent data relative to the Commission's responsibilities. The staff was headed by I. Gerald Walker, Vice-President, Executive Compensation, Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. Other staff members were:

Robert J. Freedman, Principal, Towers, Perrin, Forster and Crosby.

Charles A. Smith, Vice-President, Compensation, Chase Manhattan Bank.

John M. Reynolds, Senior Compensation Consultant, Metropolitan Life Insurance Company.

In addition, Stanley K. Schlein, Special Advisor to the Mayor, served as a liaison between the staff and the city government for obtaining background data and statistical information.

III

Recommendations of the 1979 Commission

In March 1979, the Commission to Study Salary Levels of New York City Elected Officials was formed to review the compensation levels of its elected officials and to propose changes in those levels, if warranted. The Commission conducted an extensive study and made the following proposals:

First, that the salaries of New York City elected officials be increased as follows:

<u>Position</u>		<u>Current</u>	<u>Proposed as of 7/1/79</u>	<u>Proposed as of 7/1/80</u>	<u>Proposed Total Increase</u>
Mayor	Salary	60,000	70,000	80,000	20,000
	Unvouch. Exp.*	----	----	----	----
	Total	<u>60,000</u>	<u>70,000</u>	<u>80,000</u>	<u>20,000</u>
President of City Council	Salary	50,000	55,000	60,000	10,000
	Unvouch. Exp.	6,000	6,000	6,000	----
	Total	<u>56,000</u>	<u>61,000</u>	<u>66,000</u>	<u>10,000</u>
Comptroller	Salary	50,000	55,000	60,000	10,000
	Unvouch. Exp.	6,000	6,000	6,000	----
	Total	<u>56,000</u>	<u>61,000</u>	<u>66,000</u>	<u>10,000</u>
Borough Presidents	Salary	45,000	50,000	55,000	10,000
	Unvouch. Exp.	6,000	6,000	6,000	----
	Total	<u>51,000</u>	<u>56,000</u>	<u>61,000</u>	<u>10,000</u>
City Council Members	Salary	20,000	25,000	30,000	10,000
	Unvouch. Exp.	5,000	5,000	5,000	----
	Total	<u>25,000</u>	<u>30,000</u>	<u>35,000</u>	<u>10,000</u>

\*Unvouchered expense payment.

Result: This proposal was adopted.

Second, that all unvouchered expense payments be eliminated and that the amounts of these payments be added to and recognized as salary for each of the respective officials.

Result: This proposal was adopted.

Third, that the City Council enact legislation to reinstitute reasonable financial disclosure requirements for all elected officials.

Result: This proposal was adopted.

Fourth, that the Mayor and City Council study the advisability of making Council membership a "fulltime" position.

Result: No action taken.

Fifth, that the Mayor and City Council consider a procedure to have the compensation of elected officials reviewed on a regular and periodic basis.

Result: No action taken.

IV

Findings and Recommendations

Introduction

Some people wonder why compensation of government officials needs to be adjusted periodically. Comments such as the following abound:

"Salaries of government officials, whether elected or appointed, need not be competitive with private industry salaries."

"As long as someone is willing to seek election to the office, why raise the salary?"

"The satisfaction of doing a good job should be compensation enough."

"Look at all the perquisites that go with the job."

"He doesn't need the money."

"Eighty thousand dollars is a lot of money."

"Look at the prestige and public exposure."

But are any of these comments relevant? We think not.

Since the Commission was first convened, we have had the opportunity to review the jobs of our public officials in some detail and have concluded that the public often does

not understand the considerable demands made upon its elected officials. While it is true that they have sought the office, this does not minimize the fact that they are routinely expected to devote considerably larger shares of their day to their job than the vast majority of their counterparts in the private sector.

Public service should not be limited to the wealthy, those with limited personal obligations, or, worst of all, to those who would seek office solely for the remuneration it provides. The Commission believes that New York City's elected officials should receive salaries sufficient to maintain a standard of living reasonably consistent with the status of the office and the city they represent. The salaries should be high enough to avoid limiting subordinate salaries to levels that prevent the city from attracting and retaining competent, dedicated managerial and executive personnel.

The compression created by the Mayor's salary serving as a cap for salaries of the various Agency Heads and Commissioners is not limited to that level, however. The salaries of the top aides to other elected officials are impacted in the same manner. Therefore, increasing salaries for elected officials is necessary to provide an

opportunity to compete for talented individuals at various managerial and staff levels throughout city government.

The Commission believes that salary levels should be related to the positions occupied by elected officials rather than related to the current incumbent. Individuals occupying the positions will change from time to time. The public's judgment of an incumbent's performance is properly delivered at the ballot box on Election Day. The responsibilities and demands of the positions, however, tend to remain constant regardless of the incumbent.

The salaries of elected officials have been studied by the Commission relative to the duties and responsibilities of the position, current salary and the length of time since last change, inflation, internal compression and comparison with other salaries and salary trends both within government and in the private sector.

After reviewing all of the data assembled, the public testimony and other relevant factors, the Commission recommends increased salaries. Our recommendations recognize that the changes proposed in 1979 were conservative and that it may be several years before salaries of elected officials are likely to be restudied. Since such long periods between

salary adjustments result in the creation of salary compression and the need to play catch-up, the Commission strongly urges adoption of the recommended salaries effective immediately.

Table I shows what the salaries of each of the elected officials would have to be by the end of the year to have kept pace with a variety of indices since July 1979. The data related to the Consumer Price Index for New York City, average salary increases for very large companies, compound increases for the city's Uniformed and Civilian Unions and adjustments for the non-union managerial and executive employees of the city. In all cases the recommendations of the Commission are for rates somewhat lower than would be supported by strict adherence to the indices.

### Salary Increases

#### A. Mayor

As the chief executive and administrative officer of New York City, the Mayor presides over a municipal corporation with over 7 million citizens, approximately 194,000 employees of Mayoral agencies (an additional 100,000 not directly under the Mayor's jurisdiction) and an annual budget for 1983-84 of \$16.8 billion. The responsibilities

of the position are awesome. There is no question but what the Mayor's job is one of the most demanding in the country. A work schedule of 80 or more hours per week is the rule rather than the exception.

Private sector pay comparisons are not entirely appropriate but would surely justify a pay package of several times the Commission's recommendation for a position of this magnitude. While there are many factors making it impractical to compare actual salaries between private industry and public sector jobs, it is not unreasonable to expect the trends in salary and growth to be similar. As shown in Table I , it would require a salary of from \$111,000 to \$119,000 for the Mayor's salary to have kept pace with the various relevant indices, and even then his salary would quickly fall behind before further adjustment would be considered.

The city cannot afford to have the continual salary compression which precludes reasonable salaries for key subordinates throughout city government. The resulting inability to attract and retain highly qualified and dedicated managers and professionals can be much more costly to the city in the long run than higher salaries for competent talent. It is therefore necessary to raise the Mayor's

salary to a level which will not be a cap or a hindrance to reasonable salary progress by subordinates. The Commission notes that Deputy Mayor salaries have changed four times since 1979 and are now at \$76,500, just \$3,500 less than the Mayor's. (See Table IV) There have been corresponding changes in the compensation of Agency and Commission Heads.

While the foregoing information clearly justifies a significant salary increase for the Mayor, the Commission looked at other factors also. For example, there are 12 City Managers of cities much smaller than New York who have annual salaries above \$80,000. (See Table III) The salary of the Mayor of Houston, \$86,880, exceeds that of New York City's Mayor, while the Mayors of Detroit, Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles are paid \$75,172, \$74,500, and \$73,000 respectively.

It is noteworthy that some cities pay significant salaries to both a Mayor and a City Manager, as the chart below illustrates:

<u>City</u>	<u>Mayor's Salary</u>	<u>City Manager's Salary</u>	<u>Total</u>
Los Angeles	\$73,000	\$91,225	\$164,225
San Francisco	69,295	83,181	152,476
Washington, D.C.	74,500	67,200	141,700
Chicago	60,000	81,000	141,000
Boston	65,000	60,000	125,000

Additionally, a variety of appointed positions in certain government related agencies have higher salaries than the Mayor's. For example,

<u>Position</u>	<u>Salary</u>
Chief Executive Officer, Port Authority of N.Y. & N.J.	\$125,000
President & Chief Executive Officer, Long Island Railroad	100,000
President & Chief Executive Officer, NYC Transit Authority	100,000
Chancellor, Board of Education	85,000
President, Health & Hospitals Corporation	83,250

All of the above salaries are set by the independent boards or commissions governing these institutions.

In view of all these considerations, the Commission recommends an immediate increase of \$30,000 to an annual salary of \$110,000.

#### B. President of the City Council

The President of the City Council plays a key role as a member of the Board of Estimate, possessing two votes, equal to that of the Mayor and Comptroller, in formulating the city's land use, budgetary, contractual and franchise policies, which have continued to grow in both volume and complexity during recent years.

The 1977 revisions to the City Charter had the effect of broadening the scope of the City Council President's powers including those important budget oversight activities and involvement in special investigations and projects. Additionally, the position was given the powers and responsibilities of serving as an ombudsman for the five boroughs. The City Council President, of course, is first in line of succession to the Mayor in case of his death.

The Commission believes that the proposed new salary of \$90,000 for the City Council President is justified in view of the significance of the responsibilities involved, and as a matter of equity, considering the aforementioned impact of rising inflation on the buying power of salaries set in 1979.

#### C. Comptroller

As the chief financial officer for the city, the Comptroller has overall responsibility for disbursing its \$16.8 billion budget and directing the city's investment operations. Of all of the positions under consideration this is the one for which counterparts are most easily found in private industry, and there is no doubt that a position with comparable financial accountability would command a salary at least two or

three times the \$66,000 currently paid to the New York City Comptroller. This is not even taking into account the position's additional policy making responsibility as a member of the Board of Estimate.

The salary compression problem within the city's pay structure is vividly illustrated in the Comptroller's office. Three of the subordinate Deputy Comptrollers are actually paid more than the Comptroller's salary of \$66,000 with rates of \$70,000, \$70,000, and \$69,500, and a number of other positions in the Comptroller's operation are currently at the \$60,000 and above level. The Commission believes that the proposed raise in salary to \$90,000 is fully justified.

#### D. Borough Presidents

The position of Borough President plays a significant role within the overall city governmental structure, although it is the Commission's impression that there is widespread lack of knowledge among the electorate about what a Borough President's duties are. These duties have been increasing during recent years and include membership on the Board of Estimate, Chairmanship of the Borough Board, assuring the delivery of city services, recommending capital projects

and holding public hearings on matters of public interest. The Borough President's office is its residents' link to City Hall, and working with the local Community Boards to represent their interests remains a vital aspect of the job. As is the case with the other positions under discussion, the administrative and planning aspects of the Borough Presidents' job are supplemented by considerable ceremonial duties which require their presence during evenings and week-ends.

The proposed new salary of \$80,000 seems appropriate to reflect the expanding role which the Borough Presidents are playing in the city government. Again, the effects of salary compression are apparent in some of the Borough Presidents' offices. The Deputy Borough President of Manhattan, at \$61,250, actually earns more than the man to whom he reports while the salaries of the Deputy Borough Presidents of Staten Island and Brooklyn are \$60,183 and \$55,000 respectively.

#### E. City Council Members

The responsibilities of City Council Members involve the studying and enactment of legislation, oversight of more than 100 bureaus, departments and offices within City agencies, and serving as an interface between their constituents and

city government. Although the position of City Council Member is officially classified as a part-time position, the Commission feels that the actual time spent by the majority of the Members in the exercise of his or her duties belies that classification. Where the Borough President is a type of general ombudsman for the interests of his borough, Council Members serve that same function on a more local basis for their constituents. The Commission was particularly impressed during its public hearing by the private citizens who took the time to appear and speak in behalf of the dedication to community they found in their Council Member.

Considering the responsibilities of the job, the current \$35,000 salary appears low and reflects the fact that the elected officials' salaries have not been keeping pace with those of the city government's middle management employees whose compensation is reviewed on a regular basis. The salaries of Council Members in three cities - Los Angeles at \$43,000, Detroit at \$40,000, and Washington, D.C., at \$39,323 - currently exceed those paid in New York. The Commission believes that the proposed rate of \$47,500 is well justified for New York's Council Members.

It should be noted that the recent abolishment of the ten at-large membership seats on the Council has reduced com-

compensation expenses for the Council by \$350,000.

Finally, the Commission has carefully reviewed the question of whether membership in the City Council should retain its status as a part-time position or should be changed to full-time. It is clear that, for many Members, membership in the Council already requires an expenditure of time which exceeds what would be considered full-time in private industry. However, classifying membership as full-time implies limitations on outside activities and income. The Commission believes that such changes at this time would not be constructive. Accordingly, the Commission concludes that the part-time status should be continued and recommends that no restrictions be established on Members earning outside income.

#### F. District Attorneys

At the present time the District Attorneys for the five counties within New York City each have salaries of \$65,163. Chapter 518 of the Laws of 1979 as codified within Section 928 of the County Law provides that District Attorneys in New York City shall receive an annual salary of not less than the compensation received by a Justice of the Supreme Court in the County in which he has been elected or is serving, together with such additional allowances or compensation as shall hereafter be provided by state and/or local law. This amendment modified the earlier legislation

which merely provided that the salary of District Attorneys in New York City be equal to the compensation received by the respective Justices of the Supreme Court.

Assembly bill #6845 was introduced and was then referred to the Judiciary Committee of the New York State Assembly. The bill would raise the salary of Supreme Court Justices in New York City to \$90,480 effective October 1, 1983 if enacted.

The Commission has learned that there is severe salary compression and a high turnover rate in each of the District Attorney's offices. The top four or five division heads or assistants to the District Attorney have salaries within \$500 to \$1500 of the salary of the District Attorney. Forty-two percent of the Assistant District Attorneys in New York City have been on the payroll for fewer than two years. This has to have an adverse impact on the effectiveness of the District Attorney's Office.

This is a serious and immediate problem and, therefore, needs immediate correction. Because of the interrelationships between the salaries of District Attorneys and Supreme Court Justices, the legislative history and proposed legislation in Albany, the Commission feels that it would

be inappropriate to make a specific salary recommendation for District Attorneys in this report. However, the Commission urges the Mayor to make recommendations to the City Council for adjustments in salaries of District Attorneys at the earliest possible date. If this were done the Commission believes the City resolution should stipulate that any salary increase authorized would be effective only until the State Legislature, directly or by linkage with Justices of the Supreme Court, authorizes a salary rate higher than the City authorized level. In no event should the City allow the salaries of District Attorneys to exceed the higher of the rate authorized by the City or the rate authorized by the State.

Implementation of Recommendations

The Commission members all agree that the salary increase recommendations contained in this report are not only justified by comparative data, but essential to the continuation of effective government because of the necessity to attract and retain competent, dedicated managers for key government positions.

Responsibilities and activities of our elected officials have continued to increase in recent years. Compensation of others, both in government and private industry, has increased significantly during a period when salaries of our elected officials have remained constant. Inflation has greatly eroded the purchasing power of the salary dollars and the Mayor's salary has continued to serve as a cap on salaries of City employees causing severe compression problems.

The salaries of elected officials can be increased to more appropriate levels at a cost that would have no material impact on the city's total budget of \$16.8 billion for 1984. If all of the Commission's recommendations are adopted, the total cost would be \$610,500. Given the savings of \$350,000 from the recent elimination of 10 Council seats, the net cost would be \$260,500.

The citizens of New York can help to maintain good, responsive government by paying their elected officials more adequately. The Commission strongly urges that this be done by implementation of the foregoing recommendations at the earliest possible date.

VI

TABLES AND SUPPLEMENTARY DATA

I

Salaries necessary as of 1/1/84 for Elected Officials to have kept pace with various indicators since 7/1/79.

(Salaries in thousands)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Current Salary						
Mayor	\$80.0	\$110.8	\$119.2	\$114.2	\$112.2	\$111.8
President of City Council	66.0	91.4	98.3	94.2	92.5	92.2
Comptroller	66.0	91.4	98.3	94.2	92.5	92.2
Borough Presidents	61.0	84.5	90.9	87.1	85.5	85.2
City Council Members	35.0	48.5	52.2	50.0	49.1	48.9

- (1) Salaries proposed in 1979 study based on data as of April 1979.
- (2) CPI for New York City has increased 38.5% since 7/1/79 projected through 1983.
- (3) Average percentage salary increases in large companies (3 billion or over in sales) April 1979 through 1983 excluding effects of promotion result in 49% increase.
- (4) Compounded effect of New York City Union contractual increases since July 1, 1979 for Uniformed Services totals 42.8%.
- (5) Compounded effect of New York City Union contractual increases since July 1, 1979 for Civilian employees totals 40.2%.
- (6) Compounded effect of New York City Managerial and Executive increases since July 1, 1979 including anticipated 7/1/83 changes totals 39.7%.

Salaries  
New York State Elected Officials

Governor	\$100,000
Lt. Governor	85,000
Comptroller	85,000
Attorney General	85,000
Members of Senate and Assembly	32,960

Note - The Governor of New Jersey receives a salary of \$85,000 per year.

Cities With City Managers Having Salaries Above \$80,000 \*

<u>City</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Annual Salary</u>
Miami, Fla.	347,000	\$ 98,000
Dallas, Tex.	904,000	95,240
Los Angeles, Calif.	2,967,000	91,225
San Jose, Calif.	637,000	90,552
Inglewood, Calif.	94,000	85,500
Phoenix, Ariz.	790,000	84,012
San Antonio, Tex.	785,000	83,655
Fort Worth, Tex.	385,000	83,565
San Francisco, Calif.	679,000	83,181
Nome, Alaska	2,000	82,213
Chicago, Ill.	3,005,000	81,000
San Diego, Calif.	876,000	80,520

\* All of these are non-elected employees.

Source - International City Management Association. Additionally, the Association reports 34 cities with City Manager salaries between \$70,000 and \$79,999 and 108 cities with City Manager salaries between \$60,000 and \$69,999.

Salary Progression of Deputy Mayors, 1/1/78 to 1/1/82

<u>Date</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>New Salary</u>
1/1/78	\$6,530 (13.1%)	\$57,500
9/1/80	6,500 (11.3%)	64,000
7/11/81	5,751 (9.0%)	69,751
1/1/82	6,899 (9.9%)	76,650

There have been corresponding salary increases for the city's various Agency and Commission Heads during this period.

Additional Compensation for Leadership  
Positions in City Council - Set in 1970

	<u>Current</u>
Majority Leader and Vice-Chairman	\$19,500
Minority Leader *	13,000
Chairman of Finance Committee	9,000
Chairman of General Welfare Committee**	7,000

\* This position became vacant on 6-24-83 as a result of the elimination of Council Members-at-Large which include all non-democrats.

\*\* This position also became vacant on 6-24-83.

Publications and Documents Used by the Commission

In the course of its Study, the Commission reviewed publications and documents including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Current information on the salaries of Mayors and Council Members in the nation's top 20 cities (Municipal Reference Service, National League of Cities).
2. Review of Compensation and Benefits Program for New York State Agency Heads (1980).
3. Report of the Commission To Study Salary Levels Of New York City Elected Officials (1979).
4. The 1982 Legislative Activities Report of the Council of the City of New York (1983).
5. Current and historical information on the compensation of New York City elected officials from the offices of the respective officials.
6. Current and historical information on inflation from the Regional Office of the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

7. New York City Charter.
8. Comparative salary information on Local Government Managers with salaries \$35,000 and over, as of January 1, 1983 (Urban Data Service, International City Management Association).
9. Report of the Task Force on New York City's Management Compensation to the Mayor's Management Advisory Board and the Economic Development Council (1977).
10. The Municipal Year Book (1981), International City Management Association.
11. Relevant sections of New York State Law.
12. Ad Hoc Panel on Executive, Legislative and Judicial Salaries, New York State (1979).