

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5126

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As of January 28, 2011

**Title:** An act relating to compensation adjustments for government officials.

**Brief Description:** Concerning compensation adjustments for government officials.

**Sponsors:** Senators Kilmer, Tom, Murray, Kastama, Rockefeller, Keiser, Conway, Regala, Hobbs, Shin and McAuliffe.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Ways & Means: 1/27/11.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

**Staff:** Steve Jones (786-7440)

**Background:** The salaries of county and municipal elective officials are prescribed by either the respective legislative authority or a local salary commission authorized by a local ordinance or resolution.

If a local salary commission increases the salary of county or municipal elected officials, the increase may take effect at any time, without regard to the officials' terms of office. However, decreases in salaries of incumbent county and municipal elected officials, if adopted by a salary commission, do not take effect until completion of the official's term of office.

In second-class cities and cities operating under a council-manager plan of government, if the salaries of city council members are established by ordinance adopted by the council, neither salary increases nor salary decreases may be implemented until completion of the council member's term of office.

**Summary of Bill:** If a local salary commission decreases the salary of county or municipal elected officials, the decrease may take effect at any time, without regard to the officials' terms of office.

In second-class cities and cities operating under a council-manager plan of government, if the salaries of city council members are established by ordinance adopted by the council, salary

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decreases may be implemented at any time, without regard to the council member's term of office.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** The enactment of the bill is contingent on the ratification of Senate Joint Resolution No. 8203 at the next general election.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: Elected officials should share the sacrifices that other public employees are experiencing during this period of economic hardship. The salaries of elected officials should be kept out of the political arena; the decision should be left to the discretion of the state and local salary commissions.

OTHER: Judges want to serve the people of the state in a fair and impartial manner, without undue pressure or threats of retribution. This proposal politicizes the salary setting process. The courts have already experienced significant budget reductions while experiencing greatly increased caseloads.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Kilmer, prime sponsor.

OTHER: Judge Richard McDermott, Superior Court Judges Association.