



## Majority of Alabama legislators receive automatic raise: See who accepted and who declined

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A majority of Alabama legislators accepted an automatic pay raise, the last one they will receive under a controversial 2007 pay raise resolution. *(FILE)*

**The Associated Press** By **The Associated Press**

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MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — A majority of Alabama legislators accepted an automatic pay raise this spring, the last one they will receive under a controversial 2007 pay raise resolution.

Legislators receive an annual raise in their monthly expense allowance to reflect any increase in the federal consumer price index. This year that equates to 1.5 percent increase. Lawmakers, unless they sent letters to legislative staff declining the raise, will receive an additional \$66 a month beginning later this month.

Lawmakers' total compensation is about \$56,868, assuming they have taken the automatic increases available to them over the years, according to information from the House of Representatives.

Sixty-six of the state's 104 sitting representatives accepted the raise, while 38 declined it, according to numbers provided by the clerk of the House of Representatives.

Twenty-one of the 35 senators also declined the raise, according to data from the Alabama Senate. The other 14 senators will receive the raise, the secretary of the Senate said. Of those 14, nine returned letters to the secretary of the Senate accepting the raise and another five did not return a letter saying either way.

Lawmakers this spring approved education and General Fund budgets that did not include cost of living adjustments, or COLAS, for school and state government employees after saying that revenue was too lean to support the increases. State

### List of lawmakers who accepted and declined raise:

#### Alabama House of Representatives

##### House members declining the raise

- Mike Hubbard, R-Auburn
- Richard Baughn, R-Lynn
- Elaine Beech, D-Chatom
- K.L. Brown, R-Jacksonville
- Mac Buttram, R-Cullman
- Steve Clouse, R-Ozark
- Terri Collins, R-Decatur
- Randy Davis, R-Daphne
- Paul DeMarco, R-Homewood
- Allen Farley, R-McCalla
- Lynn Greer, R-Rogersville
- Alan Harper, R-Newport
- Ed Henry, R-Decatur
- Steve Hurst, R-Munford
- Ken Johnson, R-Moulton
- Ron Johnson, R-Sylacauga
- Wayne Johnson, R-Ryland
- Mike Jones, R-Andalusia
- Paul Lee, R-Dothan

government employees received a one-time \$400 bonus. Teachers had received a 2 percent raise the previous year.

"I think it's ridiculous that the legislators took automatic COLA increases while telling state employees and teachers that they couldn't have a raise," said Sen. Bryan Taylor, R-Prattville. Taylor was one of the lawmakers who did not accept the increase.

However, the raise for the legislators costs only a sliver of what a pay increase for teachers or state employees would cost.

Rep. John Rogers, D-Birmingham, accepted the raise saying that lawmakers barely break even with what they pay for travel, lodging and other expenses.

"They can say it's a part-time job all they want, but it's a full-time job," Rogers said.

Rogers said the pay shouldn't be so low that only wealthy people can afford to serve in the Alabama Legislature.

Legislators are currently paid under a convoluted system that dates back to when lawmakers traveled by train to Montgomery.

They get a \$10-a-day salary, \$50 per day in expense money during session meeting days, a monthly expense allowance and mileage based on railroad miles for one round-trip to Montgomery each session.

Lawmakers in 2007 approved a resolution that increased their compensation by 61 percent and set up the system of annual raises. Then-Gov. Bob Riley vetoed the raise, but legislators overrode the veto.

After the November legislative elections,

- Wes Long, R-Guntersville
- Thad McClammy, D-Montgomery
- Jim McClendon, R-Springville
- Mac McCutcheon, R-Huntsville
- John Merrill, R-Tuscaloosa
- Barry Moore, R-Enterprise
- Johnny Mack Morrow, D-Red Bay
- Jim Patterson, R-Meridianville
- Dimitri Polizos, R-Montgomery
- Bill Poole, R-Tuscaloosa
- Kerry Rich, R-Albertville
- Bill Roberts, R-Jasper
- David Sessions, R-Grand Bay
- Harry Shiver, R-Bay Minette
- Mark Tuggle, R-Alexander City
- Lesley Vance, R-Phenix City
- Kurt Wallace, R-Maplesville
- April Weaver, R-Alabaster
- Dan Williams, R-Athens

#### **House members accepting the raise**

- Alan Baker, R-Brewton
- Mike Ball, R-Madison
- George Bandy, D-Opeika
- Paul Beckman, R-Prattville
- Marcel Black, D-Tuscumbia
- Daniel Boman, D-Sulligent
- Alan Boothe, R-Troy
- Barbara Boyd, D-Anniston
- Napoleon Bracy, D-Prichard
- Duwayne Bridges, R-Valley
- Greg Burdine, D-Florence
- James Buskey, D-Mobile
- Mack Butler, R-Rainbow City
- Jim Carns, R-Mountain Brook
- Donnie Chesteen, R-Geneva
- Adline Clarke, D-Mobile
- Merika Coleman-Evans, D-Pleasant Grove
- David Colston, D-Hayneville
- Dickie Drake, R-Leeds
- Chris England, D-Tuscaloosa
- Joe Faust, R-Fairhope
- Chad Fincher, R-Semmes

lawmakers will have a new pay structure under a constitutional amendment that voters approved in 2012.

The new pay structure will give lawmakers a base salary equal to the state's median household income, which the U.S. Census Bureau estimated at \$41,574 in 2012.

Additionally, they would be paid a daily expense allowance and mileage, equal to what state employees get for travel expenses.

Taylor, who sponsored the change, said legislators pay would go up when the median household income increases, and down when it declines. He said the new structure will cut lawmakers' compensation.

"It's like performance pay. It directly ties legislator pay to the quality of life of the people they are serving," Taylor said.

Voters would have to amend the state constitution to alter the legislative pay structure. Taylor said that would prevent lawmakers from "voting themselves a pay raise ever again."

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- Craig Ford, D-Gadsden
- Berry Forte, D-Eufaula
- Victor Gaston, R-Mobile
- Juandalynn Givan, D-Birmingham
- Todd Greeson, R-Ider
- Dexter Grimsley, D-Newville
- Laura Hall, D-Huntsville
- Micky Hammon, R-Decatur
- Mike Hill, R-Columbiana
- Alvin Holmes, D-Montgomery
- Mike Holmes, R-Wetumpka
- Ralph Howard, D-Greensboro
- Joe Hubbard, D-Montgomery
- Jamie Ison, R-Mobile
- Thomas Jackson, D-Thomasville
- Anthony Johnson, D-Birmingham

## Alabama Senate

### Senators declining the raise

- Gerald Allen, R-Tuscaloosa
- Scott Beason, R-Gardendale
- Dick Brewbaker, R-Pike Road
- Paul Bussman, R-Cullman
- Gerald Dial, R-Lineville
- Rusty Glover, R-Semmes
- Bill Hightower, R-Mobile
- Jimmy Holley, R-Elba
- Bill Holtzclaw, R-Madison
- Tammy Irons, D-Florence
- Del Marsh, R-Anniston
- Shad McGill, R-Scottsboro
- Arthur Orr, R-Decatur
- Greg Reed, R-Jasper
- Paul Sanford, R-Huntsville
- Clay Scofield, R-Guntersville
- Harri Anne Smith, I-Slocomb
- Bryan Taylor, R-Prattville
- Cam Ward, R-Alabaster
- Tom Whatley, R-Auburn
- Phil Williams, R-Rainbow City

### Senators accepting the raise

- Billy Bleasley, D-Clayton
- Slade Blackwell, R-Mountain Brook
- Linda Coleman, D-Birmingham
- Priscilla Dunn, D-Bessemer
- Vivian Davis Figures, D-Mobile
- Trip Pittman, R-Montrose
- Bobby Singleton, D-Greensboro
- Rodger Smitherman, D-Birmingham
- Jabo Waggoner, R-Vestavia Hills

**Senators who did not return a letter and thus will get the raise**

- Roger Bedford, D-Russellville
- Jerry Fielding, R-Sylacauga
- Marc Keahey, D-Grove Hill
- Quinton Ross, D-Montgomery
- Hank Sanders, D-Selma

\*Source: Alabama Senate and Alabama House of Representatives / April 14, 2014