North Dakota Legislative Council

Prepared for the Legislative Procedure
and Arrangements Committee
LC# 27.9276.01000
September 2026

HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE COMPENSATION AND EXPENSES

This memorandum provides information on:

- The history of legislative compensation and expense reimbursement in North Dakota.
- Changes in the amount of additional compensation provided to the Speaker of the House, legislative leaders, and committee chairmen.
- Rates of compensation and expense reimbursement provided to members of the Legislative Assembly.
- 2023-25 biennium expenditures for the Legislative Assembly.

STATUTORY PROVISIONS RELATING TO LEGISLATIVE COMPENSATION RECOMMENDATIONS

House Bill 1001 (2011) amended North Dakota Century Code Section 54-03-20 to require the Legislative Management, prior to each regular legislative session, make recommendations and submit any necessary legislation to adjust legislative compensation amounts. Previously, the Legislative Compensation Commission made recommendations and submitted legislation to adjust legislative compensation. However, House Bill 1261 (2011) repealed the commission. The following is a history of the commission:

- The commission was established by the 1969 Legislative Assembly. Consisting of five members appointed by the Governor, the primary duty of the commission was to determine appropriate rates of expense allowance and compensation to be paid to members of the Legislative Assembly. In 1979, after 10 years of existence, the law that created the original commission was repealed.
- The commission was recreated by passage of Senate Bill 2360 (1983). The bill, codified as Sections 54-03-19.1 and 54-03-19.2, once again directed the commission to determine appropriate levels of expense allowance and compensation to be paid to members of the Legislative Assembly.
- In 1993, Section 54-03-19.1 was amended to direct the commission to also develop recommendations for a long-term policy on legislative compensation, expense allowance, and insurance benefits. In addition, the 1993 Legislative Assembly amended Section 54-03-19.2 to allow the commission to file with the Legislative Council a bill incorporating its recommendations.
- The 1997 Legislative Assembly amended Section 54-03-19.1 to provide no more than three of the five appointees to the commission may represent the same political party.
- House Bill 1261 (2011) repealed Sections 54-03-19.1 and 54-03-19.2 relating to the commission.

HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE COMPENSATION AND EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

The following table summarizes increases in legislative compensation and expense reimbursement from 1889 to 2026:

Year	Compensation for Each Calendar Day During Session	Expense Reimbursement During Session			Expense Reimbursement or Compensation for Each Month During Term of Office	Compensation for Each Day Attending Interim Meetings
		Per Session	For Each Day During Session	For Each Month During Session		
1889	$5	10 cents per mile				
1945	$5	$300				$5.00
1949	$5	$600				$10.00
1957	$5	$1,200[1]			[1]	$10.00
1965	$5	$1,200[2]			$35[2]	$10.00
1967	$5		$25		$35	$20.00
1969	$5		$35		$35	$30.00
1971	$5		$40		$50	$30.00
1973	$5		$50		$50	$30.00
1975	$5		$60		$75	$45.00
1977	$5		$60		$150	$45.00
1979	$5		$70		$150	$52.00
1981	$5		$85		$180	$62.50
1983	$40[3]		$50[3]		$180	$62.50
1985	$90			$600[4]	$180[5]	$62.50
1997	$111			$650	$250	$62.50
1999	$111			$650	$250	$75.00
2001	$125			$650	$250	$100.00
2005	$125			$900[6]	$350[6]	$100.00
2007	$130			$900	$364	$104.00[7]
2008	$135			$900	$378	$108.00[7]
2009	$141			$1,040[8]	$396	$141.00[7,9]
2010	$148			$1,040[8]	$415	$148.00[7,9]
2011	$152			$1,351[10]	$427	$152.00[7,9]
2012	$157			$1,351[10]	$440	$157.00[7,9]
2013	$162			$1,569[11]	$453	$162.00[7,9]
2014	$167			$1,569[11]	$467	$167.00[7,9]
2015	$172			$1,569[11]	$481	$172.00[7,9]
2016	$177			$1,682[12]	$495	$177.00[7,9]
2017	$177			$1,682[12]	$495	$177.00[7,9]
2018	$177			$1,758[13]	$495	$177.00[7,9]
2019	$181			$1,758[13]	$505	$181.00[7,9]
2020	$186			$1,814[14]	$518	$186.00[7,9]
2021	$189			$1,814[14]	$526	$189.00[7,9]
2022	$193			$1,814[14]	$537	$193.00[7,9]
2023	$205			$1,814[14]	$569	$205.00[7,9]
2024	$213			$2,022[15]	$592	$213.00[7,9]
2025	$219			$2,475[16]	$610	$219.00[7,9]
2026	$226			$2,475[16]	$628	$226.00[7,9]

[1]Section 54-03-20 was amended in 1959 to provide the $1,200 payment was reimbursement for expenses incurred during the interim and during the session.

[2]Section 54-03-20 was amended in 1965 to provide the $1,200 payment was reimbursement for expenses incurred during the session only and to provide for payments of $35 per month during each legislator's term of office for uncompensated expenses.

[3]Bismarck legislators received $90 per day during session as compensation and did not receive any amount for daily expense reimbursement.

[4]Section 54-03-20 was amended to provide legislators receive reimbursement for lodging or mileage at the rates provided for state employees, to a maximum of $600 per month for lodging for out-of-area legislators or for mileage for legislators not claiming lodging reimbursements.

[5]House Bill 1243 (1985) amended Section 54-03-20 to provide the monthly amount paid to legislators during the interim was compensation, not reimbursement for expenses.

[6]The 2005 Legislative Assembly increased the maximum lodging expense reimbursement allowed during legislative sessions from $650 to $900 per month effective January 1, 2005, and increased legislators' monthly compensation from $250 to $350 effective July 1, 2005.

[7]In addition to the compensation for each day attending interim meetings, legislators are entitled to receive up to $35 per day for expense reimbursement for meals. House Bill 1426 (2011) increased the expense reimbursement for meals from $25 per day to $30 per day effective August 1, 2011. House Bill 1368 (2013) increased the maximum meal reimbursement rates for state employees and legislators for in-state travel from a total of $30 per day to $35 per day effective August 1, 2013. Senate Bill 2124 (2023) increased the maximum meal reimbursement rates for state employees and legislators for in-state travel from a total of $35 per day to $45 per day effective August 1, 2023.

[8]The 2009 Legislative Assembly increased the maximum lodging expenses reimbursement allowed during legislative sessions from $900 per month to 30 times 55 percent of the state daily lodging expense reimbursement rate. This increase was effective August 1, 2009. Based on the estimated state daily lodging reimbursement rate of $63 per night, the maximum monthly lodging expense reimbursement is estimated to be $1,040 per month.

[9]House Bill 1001 (2007) increased legislators' interim meeting pay to $135 beginning July 1, 2009. Senate Bill 2064 (2009) increased legislators' interim meeting pay by 5 percent per year from $135 to $141 per day effective August 1, 2009, and to $148 per day effective July 1, 2010. House Bill 1001 (2011) increased legislators' interim meeting pay by 3 percent per year from $148 to $152 per day effective July 1, 2011, and to $157 per day effective July 1, 2012. Senate Bill 2001 (2011) increased legislators' interim meeting pay by 3 percent per year from $157 to $162 per day effective July 1, 2013, and to $167 per day effective July 1, 2014. House Bill 1001 (2015) increased legislators' interim meeting pay by 3 percent per year from $167 to $172 per day effective July 1, 2015, and to $177 per day effective July 1, 2016. House Bill 1001 (2019) increased legislators' interim meeting pay by 2 percent the 1st year and 2.5 percent the 2nd year from $177 to $181 per day effective July 1, 2019, and to $186 per day effective July 1, 2020. Senate Bill 2001 (2021) increased legislators' interim meeting pay by 1.5 percent the 1st year and 2 percent the 2nd year from $186 to $189 per day effective July 1, 2021, and to $193 per day effective July 1, 2022. House Bill 1001 (2023) increased legislators' interim meeting pay by 6 percent the 1st year and 4 percent the 2nd year from $193 to $205 per day effective July 1, 2023, and to $213 per day effective July 1, 2024. Senate Bill 2001 (2025) increased legislators' interim meeting pay by 3 percent the 1st year and 3 percent the 2nd year from $213 to $219 per day effective July 1, 2025, and to $226 per day effective July 1, 2026.

[10]Senate Bill 2015 (2011) increased the maximum lodging expenses reimbursement allowed during legislative sessions from $1,040 per month to 30 times 65 percent of the state daily lodging expense reimbursement rate. This increase became effective August 1, 2011. Based on the state daily lodging reimbursement rate of $69.30 per night, the maximum monthly lodging expense reimbursement was $1,351 per month.

[11]Senate Bill 2001 (2013) increased the maximum allowable monthly lodging reimbursement for legislators during legislative sessions from 65 to 70 percent of the state employee lodging reimbursement rate multiplied by 30, effective July 1, 2013. Based on the state daily lodging reimbursement rate of $74.70 per night, the maximum monthly lodging expense reimbursement was $1,569 per month.

[12]Based on the state daily lodging reimbursement rate of $80.10 per night, the maximum monthly lodging expense reimbursement was $1,682 per month.

[13]Based on the state daily lodging reimbursement rate of $83.70 per night in effect in August 2018, the maximum monthly lodging expense reimbursement was $1,753 per month.

[14]Based on the state daily lodging reimbursement rate of $86.40 per night in effect in August 2020, the maximum monthly lodging expense reimbursement was $1,814 per month.

[15]Based on the state daily lodging reimbursement rate of $96.30 per night in effect in August 2024, the maximum monthly lodging expense reimbursement is $2,022 per month.

[16]Senate Bill 2084 (2025) increased the maximum allowable monthly lodging reimbursement for legislators during legislative sessions from 70 to 75 percent of the state employee lodging reimbursement rate multiplied by 30, effective July 1, 2025. Based on the state daily lodging reimbursement rate of $110.00 per night, the maximum monthly lodging expense reimbursement is $2,475 per month.

ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION - 1989 TO 2026 CHANGES

Year	Compensation for Each Month During Term of Office			Expense Reimbursement During Regular, Special, or Organizational Session, Per Day		
	Majority and Minority Leaders	Chairman of Legislative Management	Majority and Minority Leaders	Assistant Majority and Minority Leaders	Chairmen of Substantive Standing Committees	Speaker of the House
1989			$10	$5	$5	$10
1999	$250		$10	$5	$5	$10
2001	$250	$250	$10	$5	$5	$10
2007	$260	$260	$10	$5	$5	$10
2008	$270	$270	$10	$5	$5	$10
2009	$284	$284	$10	$5	$5	$10
2010	$298	$298	$10	$5	$5	$10
2011	$307	$307	$15	$10	$10	$15
2012	$316	$316	$15	$10	$10	$15
2013	$325	$325	$15	$10	$10	$15
2014	$335	$335	$15	$10	$10	$15
2015	$345	$345	$15	$10	$10	$15
2016	$355	$355	$15	$10	$10	$15
2019	$362	$362	$15	$10	$10	$15
2020	$371	$371	$15	$10	$10	$15
2021	$377	$377	$15	$10	$10	$15
2022	$385	$385	$15	$10	$10	$15
2023	$408	[1]	$15	$10	$10	$15
2024	$424		$15	$10	$10	$15
2025	$437		$20	$15	$15	$20
2026	$450		$20	$15	$15	$20

[1] House Bill 1313 (2023) amended Section 54-35-06 to provide that the Chairman of the Legislative Management must be the Majority Leader of one house of the Legislative Assembly.

LEGISLATOR BROADBAND AND MOBILE DATA REIMBURSEMENT

Each legislator is entitled to receive a broadband and mobile data reimbursement stipend if they sign an agreement that the stipend will be used for technology-related costs.

Year	Monthly Stipend
2013[1]	$90
2023[2]	$200

[1] Approved by the Legislative Procedure and Arrangements Committee in September 2013.
[2] House Bill 1001 (2023).

2023-25 BIENNIUM EXPENDITURES FOR THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

The amounts spent by the 2025 Legislative Assembly for the regular legislative session and the 2023-25 biennium in total are shown on the following schedule:

	2025 Regular Legislative Session Costs	October 2023 Special Session Costs	Other Costs	Total
Costs paid during the 2023-25 biennium				
Legislators' salaries and wages				
Salaries and wages	$3,732,420	$113,740	$2,002,199	$5,848,359
Fringe benefits	285,530	$8,701	243,690	537,921
Health insurance	0	0	5,008,417	5,008,417
Total legislators' salaries and wages	$4,017,950	$122,441	$7,254,306[1]	$11,394,697
Mileage and lodging				
Lodging during session	$921,905	$32,445	$0	$954,350
Mileage during session	497,578	26,662	0	524,240
Total mileage and lodging	$1,419,483	$59,107	$0	$1,478,590
Total legislators' salaries and wages, mileage, and lodging	$5,437,433	$181,548	$7,254,306	$12,873,287
Session employees' salaries and wages	1,650,376	15,009	0	1,665,385
Other expenses	226,158	99,055	4,313,391	4,638,604
Capital assets	0	0	4,675,561[4]	4,675,561
Total 2025 legislative session costs	$7,313,967[2]	$295,612[3]	$16,243,258	$23,852,837

[1]Other costs - Legislators' salaries and wages - Includes legislators' monthly compensation and health insurance.

[2]2025 regular legislative session costs per day:

	Cost Per Day
77 legislative days (including the 3-day organizational session)	$94,987
122 calendar days (including the 3-day organizational session and travel days to and from the organizational and regular sessions)	$59,951

[3]The 2023 special legislative session consisted of 3 legislative days and 4 calendar days.

[4]Expenditures incurred during the 2023-25 biennium for capital assets, including information technology servers and storage related to an information technology expansion and costs related to a bill drafting software rewrite.