

The Fray: State panel to hold hearings on legislator raises

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The four men poised to award New York legislators their first pay raises in 20 years will hold two public hearings this week without having revealed the raise amounts.

The New York State Compensation Committee will hold its first hearing at 11 a.m. Wednesday at State University Plaza in Albany. The second hearing is at noon Friday at the SUNY Global Center in Manhattan. Details are on the committee's website: nyscompensation.ny.gov.

The panel was created by the state budget in April, but didn't hold its first meeting until Nov. 13 and must decide on raises by Dec. 10. In addition to state legislators, the committee will also hike salaries for three statewide officials — attorney general, comptroller and lieutenant governor — and for top administration officials. Its four appointees are state Comptroller Tom DiNapoli (who says he will recuse himself from his own raise), New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer, SUNY Chairman H. Carl McCall and CUNY Chairman Bill Thompson.

Since 1999, New York's 63 senators and 150 Assembly members have been paid a base salary of \$79,500, currently the third-highest pay among state legislators in the U.S. Most also get stipends for party leadership titles and committee ranks that range from \$9,000 to \$41,500.

The committee has only six business days after the second public hearing to approve raises. It hasn't announced the date yet on which it will do so.

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