

March 11, 2015

## Stop Phony Crony Pay Grab

Are people in Arkansas as stupid as their legislators think?

Last November, legislators tricked enough voters to narrowly pass Issue 3.

I've addressed before the measure's dishonest ballot language, mis-identifying a doubling of allowed terms as the "setting of term limits." And about a much-ballyhooed gift ban that has proven so weak that now most legislators are offered "free meals nearly every day."



Perhaps the biggest of the tricks used to pass the measure was this: Hide from voters the measure's establishment of an "Independent Citizens Commission" . . . a majority hand-picked by those same legislators.

This "Legislative Cronies Commission" (as it should be called) has announced it will unilaterally hike pay by an outrageous 150 percent!

The commission claims to have looked at legislative salaries in nearby states, except Texas and Mississippi — two states that just so happen to pay lower salaries. Economic factors were also considered, supposedly, but household income in Arkansas has actually dropped in the last decade.

The commission held only one poorly publicized hearing — at, get this, 10:00 am on a Monday, when most folks were working. No surprise, public comments have run ten to one negative. Letters and emails contain words and phrases such as "shameful," "insult," "actually sick to my stomach," "a joke," "ludicrous," "appalled" and "slap in the face."

This led Larry Ross, chief crony on the commission, to rudely dis citizens, telling the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette that he would look at the "quality" of comments, not the "quantity."

Only a tsunami of public anger can stop this rip-off of Arkansas taxpayers. Act fast. A March 16 meeting is set to finalize the increase.

**Tell the Independent [sic] Citizens [yeah, right] Commission what you think: call (501) 682-1866.**

This is Common Sense. Paul Jacob.

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