

BILL010(23)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 231

BUDGET (BUD)

BUDGET (BUD) Meeting

Meeting Date: May 15, 2023 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 0

Oppose: 29

I wish to comment: 6

Name: Betty Char	Email: beeps@hawaii.rr.com	Zip: 96817
Representing: Citizens' Caucus	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: May 10, 2023 @ 12:58 PM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>Citizens' Caucus is ok with providing council members with a 4% raise, but is strongly opposed to providing council members with the proposed 64% raise. Citizens in Honolulu are struggling and yet, the Council is brazenly pushing for a 64% raise. They knew the salary when they ran for office. If they didn't like it, they shouldn't have run. If they accept the 64% raise, I hope they are all voted out during their next election.</p> <p>I generally supported Tommy Waters and Esther Kiaaina, but their current support of the proposed 64% raise is making me think twice about their motives for serving.</p> <p>Kudos to Augie Tuba and Andria Tupola. Also, kudos to Josh Frost and Natalie Iwasa.</p> <p>Finally, I have written my council member Tyler Do Santos a couple of times, but he has not even had the courtesy to acknowledge my email. When I called, they said he was out of town and that I needed to talk to this constituent services staffer. So much for working full-time. The only folks that are working full-time are the Council staff. Tyler during the next election, I will vote for your constituent staffer vs. you. Since he has more contact with the community.</p> <p>Citizens' Caucus.</p>		
Name: Dulce Belen	Email: nuttyrascal@gmail.com	Zip: 96816
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 11, 2023 @ 09:23 AM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>The silence from the majority of the Honolulu City Council regarding the proposed 64% increase in their salary speaks volumes.</p> <p>I applaud Council members Tulba and Tupola for knowing the reality of what the people they represent are going through. They are honest and in touch with the economic struggle. Unfortunately, the rest of the council members lost clarity on why they held the positions they were voted in and needed us to redirect them elsewhere. In addition, the new council members should prove their worth before staying coy or silent and hoping they get the proposed increase. I strongly oppose the increase.</p>		
Name: Donald Voyce	Email: voyce@hawaii.rr.com	Zip: 96821
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 12, 2023 @ 12:27 PM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>I am opposed vehemently to the proposed pay raises for the mayor and his program heads and especially the 64% raises for city council members.</p> <p>Don Voyce, Aina Haina</p>		
Name: Shirley Roper	Email: shirleyroper99@gmail.com	Zip: 96815
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 12, 2023 @ 02:10 PM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>When I first read about this 64% increase in salary for cit council members, I thought it was a misprint because it's so ludicrous. With families struggling w inflation, increased taxes due to runaway rail costs, one wonders if it will ever end.</p> <p>I most emphatically OPPOSE raising salaries by such a ridiculous percentage.</p>		
Name: Maya Nouchi	Email: mayakawaguchi@yahoo.com	Zip: 96701

Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 13, 2023 @ 11:39 AM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>I vehemently OPPOSE a 64% raise for council members. I would support a more reasonable raise of 4-5%, but 64% is unconscionable and a slap in the face to the hardworking voters of Hawaii. Our public school teachers, who have a much greater impact and influence on the future of Hawaii, recently received a 14% increase spread out over 4 years. For council members to receive anything more than that is incredibly self-serving and out of touch with public sentiment.</p> <p>The salary commission was wrong to ignore public outcry and recommend such an outrageous increase. Elected officials are public servants. For the council members to accept an exorbitant salary increase when many people in Hawaii are struggling to get by is incredibly callous and offensive. And the justification that they work 60 hours a week is even more offensive. There are many people in Hawaii who work multiple jobs, over 60 hours a week, and they don't make anything close to what the council members are trying to get for themselves. Hiding behind the salary commission and saying that it was the salary commission's recommendation, not the council's, is cowardly and dishonest. If any councilmember believes he or she deserves a 64% raise, then they should say so publicly.</p> <p>I commend Council Members Tulba, Tupola, and Weyer for clearly stating their positions in opposition of the 64% raise. The other 6 members owe the voters a clear decision on their position on the proposed raise. They owe their constituents honesty and transparency.</p> <p>I OPPOSE the 64% raise for councilmembers, and I urge the Council to reject the salary commission's recommendation. Thank you.</p>		
Name: Carol Kawaguchi	Email: kaoru4@gmail.com	Zip: 96701
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 13, 2023 @ 11:56 AM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>I am writing to OPPOSE a 64% raise for council members. If public sentiment is overwhelmingly opposed, the Council should reject the raise. Elected officials are supposed to serve their constituents, not themselves. All councilmembers knew what the salary was when they ran for office. If they wanted to make more money, they should not have run for office. Our Founding Fathers never intended for politics to be a full-time or life-long career. Politics was never intended to be a profession. So, if any council member tries to make the argument that they deserve to be paid like a full-time government employee, or a private sector employee, they are completely out of touch with the history and foundation of our government.</p> <p>The public school teachers recently received a raise of 14% over 4 years. Teachers have a direct influence on the future of our society because they educate, shape, and nurture our children. Elected officials are nowhere near as important to our community as our teachers. It is disgraceful and an insult to all teachers if the City Council allows themselves to receive a raise that is over 4 times what the teachers received.</p> <p>I oppose a 64% raise for council members, and I urge all council members to reject the raise.</p>		
Name: Eric Nouchi	Email: ericnouchi@yahoo.com	Zip: 96701
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 13, 2023 @ 12:00 PM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>I am writing to oppose a 64% raise for City Council members. It is exorbitant and completely out of touch with public sentiment.</p> <p>I urge all councilmembers to reject the 64% raise proposed by the Salary Commission.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>		
Name: Suzanne Alawa	Email: sue.alawa@gmail.com	Zip: 96701

Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 13, 2023 @ 12:43 PM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>Over the 52 years I have lived here, I have seen different City Councils accomplishments ranging from excellent to abysmal. This Council needs a good dose of reality with the proposed raises when the state of the City is so very poor. The gluttonous propsoals for their paid positions is a slap in the face of so many tax payers who are struggling to pay rent or mortgages, get to and from work and to afford the skyrocketing costs of transportation and wellness. I have seen this Council renege on its own moratoriums on hlgH-rises in favor of the megabucks charged for permits to so many behemoths to such a point that construction cranes are everywhere when the infrastructure is unable to handle the buildings. The streets are in such horrific condition, it is nearly impossible to navigate some of them, and for all of this, City Council thinks they deserve an excessive raise??? Really??? How about taking a real poll from the PEOPLE who have to live with their gross shortcomings to see if WE think they deserve such an obscene raise. It becomes very clear as to why such a poll will never be taken. They ask too much for too little.</p>		
Name: Susan Quarnstrom-Paul	Email: hisusanpaul@gmail.com	Zip: 96825
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 13, 2023 @ 02:40 PM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>64% PAY RAISE, for councilmembers, NO!!! I have valid concerns over the amount of money being offered here. 3-4% is/was standard.</p> <p>I'D LOVE TO HAVE A 64% RAISE EITHER DURING MY WORKING YEARS OR NOW BEING RETIRED!</p>		
Name: Ron Mata	Email: rcmata@twc.com	Zip: 96782
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 13, 2023 @ 03:16 PM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>Aloha Council Members,</p> <p>This is in regards to the proposed "ridiculous" pay raises for the Honolulu City Council members. The pay raises of over 64% is unheard of during this time of economic hardship for hard working families and struggling businesses. The HSTA negotiated and received a 14.5% over a period of four years. Yet, the Salary Commission proposes an instant pay raise of over 64% to "part-time" Council members to receive nearly \$114,000 per year. That is unheard of. What other entity has received such a pay raise in the history of the Honolulu City government? Please don't set such a negative precedent that whoever votes for it will be remembered for years and decades to come. Do the right thing. Re-negotiate for a pay raise of 10%, 15%, or even 20% but certainly not 64%! Mahalo, Ron Mata, A Voter for many, many decades</p>		
Name: Blaine DeRamos	Email: undrcvrlvr94@gmail.com	Zip: 96821
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 14, 2023 @ 01:38 AM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>I strongly oppose the council members 64% pay increase. As public servants these part time representatives should not be making more money than a full time hardworking person. We the hard working public would never be able to get a part time job and make over \$100,000 and neither should our representatives. This is a slap in the face to all the people of Hawaii struggling to survive. I want to see my tax dollars fix the backlog at Department of Planning and permitting, Hiring and filling the 300+ vacancies at Honolulu Police Department, computer upgrades and hiring of workers of the unemployment department.</p>		
Name: Jacque Fukunaga-Kaneshiro	Email: jsbrm@yahoo.com	Zip: 96789
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:

Self	Oppose	May 14, 2023 @ 04:11 AM
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Testimony:

Please do not approve the pay raises for city council. It is a ridiculous amount that should make you all feel horrible. I can see a 2-5% increase over 5 years. With your constituents out there living paycheck to paycheck, this is a major slap in the face. Any council member that votes in favor will likely never be re-elected.

The mayor does not deserve a raise either, look at his current salary, it's already extremely high and he really hasn't done anything for us, except try to ban law abiding citizens with conceal carry, from carrying in certain areas with signs. Hello! Only law abiding citizens will obey signs! Now the non-law abiding citizens know where they'll be safe! Sorry off track, Besides his base pay look at all the benefits he also receives. There are so many other ways to spend the money.

Take care of the homeless situation first. How?

1. Have shelters available.
2. Enforce park rules and regulations and other regular city laws pertaining to trash, tent, bikes etc.
3. Enforce the laws everyday. As soon as you clear away an area there needs to be constant enforcement to deter homeless from setting up again.
4. This should force or encourage them to go to the shelters.
5. Drug treatment, work skills training and mental health are necessary as well.

This is a decades long plan with multiple agency cooperation, but absolutely necessary.

Mahalo. Again NO raises for city council or mayor. Ridiculous amount.

Name: Lokalia Kaneshiro	Email: Jsbrm@yahoo.com	Zip: 96789
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 14, 2023 @ 04:14 AM

Testimony:

Until last night full time teachers were the lowest paid in the nation. There was little reward for the teachers of merit who had worked full time for years just to get a raise spread over a period of years. Yes I am aware that they are State employees and our council members are City employees but honestly teachers on the neighbor islands pay more for gas and food than those on Oahu. There was no adjustment for their added cost. I am appalled that one official said that the council member raises were "only 1 percent of the City budget". Wouldn't we all like raises that equal 1% of Honolulu's operating budget! Justifications fall flat in the face of inflation, businesses closing, higher property taxes and slow return of Japanese tourism. Show me what you have accomplished this year before you ask for a raise. We all work longer hours than we expected and some do it 7 days a week just to keep food on the table. Shame!

Name: Dylan Armstrong	Email: dylan.p.armstrong@gmail.com	Zip: 96822
Representing: Self	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: May 14, 2023 @ 05:33 AM

Testimony:

To the Honorably Calvin Say, Chair
Budget Committee
Honolulu City Council

RE: Bill 10, relating to the budget

The Council has a clear moral objective before it.

The Council ought to amend Bill 10 to include the work done previously by Council Members Tupola and Tulba in trying to limit the outrageous pay raises which are now slated to become law. That is, these raises will become law if the Council continues to neglect a needed public Council vote on the Honolulu Salary Commission's proposed raise.

Residents are receiving whopping property tax assessments, up as much as 36%. Residents are paying more, now, thanks to inflation before taxes, plus new tax increases, all to receive less. There's less safe and filthier streets, less safe and filthier parks,

more crowding even as some houses become empty, more tourist drownings, persistently high homelessness, and fracturing infrastructure.

On March 26, the Star-Advertiser published a raise-based column written by me, "Politicians have become privileged class." The link is at:

<https://www.staradvertiser.com/2023/03/26/editorial/island-voices/column-politicians-have-become-privileged-class/>

More letters followed in a deluge:

March 29th: Letter: "High cost of living, plus pay hike for city leaders. Tempers flare over proposal to slash city spending in bid to provide tax relief:"

<https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/2023/03/31/tempers-flare-over-effort-slash-city-spending-effort-provide-tax-relief/>

March 30th Letter: "Columns, editorial show government excesses:"

<https://www.staradvertiser.com/2023/03/30/editorial/letters/letter-columns-editorial-show-government-excesses/>

March 31st Letters: "Vote out officials who would seek pay raises:"

<https://www.staradvertiser.com/2023/03/31/editorial/letters/letter-vote-out-officials-who-would-seek-pay-raises/>

and: "Letter: Teachers, not politicians, deserve higher pay"

<https://www.staradvertiser.com/2023/03/31/editorial/letters/letter-teachers-not-politicians-deserve-higher-pay/>

"Tempers flare over proposal to slash city spending in bid to provide tax relief" on Hawaii News Now:

<https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/2023/03/31/tempers-flare-over-effort-slash-city-spending-effort-provide-tax-relief/>

It is easy to knee-jerk be against any and all pay raises. But 63% for the Council (from an original near-doubling proposal) is offensive. The 12% for Departmental Directors and comparable amounts for the Managing Director makes more sense.

Case in point: how about the Neighborhood Assistants (NA)? When's the last time the City gave the NA a real pay raise? When is the last time all the NA positions were filled? These people are doing more work for us with less help, for less pay.

Chair Say, in the time I've known you I've seen you set the highest standard for principled leadership as a legislative. I've seen your opponents call you all manner of slander and lies, as mine (much of the same people, some of whom are devoid of sympathy, perspective, or insight) have done to me. I've seen bullies surrender to their opportunism and sadism to block your efforts, mine, or those of friends of our's. Some even managed to fool some voters and get elected. One or two I worked to retire, with success, thanks to the voters. I do not enjoy being in the position of advocating against benefits for my friends, but there is a reason this is called public service.

I hope the Council recognizes the difference between nominal amount of the money, and the principle which supersedes this. If not, I hope the Council has the intelligence to understand the groundswell of public anger, righteous anger, which is building, and the frustrations that it may provide to both important services to the public as well as our public servant's careers.

Thank you for your consideration.

Dylan P. Armstrong

Name: Walter Miske	Email: wchuckm1@yahoo.com	Zip: 96707
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 14, 2023 @ 11:21 AM

Testimony:

I oppose 64.% pay increase. All of you know it's too large. How can you give the teachers a 14% raise then accept a 64% for yourselves Shame on you !

Name: Darsha Lee	Email: darsha@hawaii.edu	Zip: 96789
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 14, 2023 @ 11:54 AM

Testimony:

Aloha,

As a concerned Hawai'i voter, I would like to voice opposition to the proposed 64% increase in pay for City council members.

While I understand that the councilmembers themselves did not propose the raises, the councilmembers DO have the opportunity and responsibility to REJECT the proposed raise. These raises are even more concerning in light of the many issues that face the city that have not been adequately addressed (workflow; understaffed/undercompensated departments-EMS, HPD, and others; houselessness, cost of living, corruption etc.). I am additionally concerned that RES23-082 which would have addressed the payraises does not seem to be a priority for any of the agendas for May. I urge the councilmembers supporting these enormous raises to reconsider their position.

Name: Choon James	Email: ChoonJamesHawaii@gmail.com	Zip: 96762
Representing: CountryTalkStory.com	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 14, 2023 @ 12:37 PM

Name: Mark Shomura	Email: kcventures@gmail.com	Zip: 96782
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 14, 2023 @ 12:56 PM

Testimony:
I oppose any raises for the council members this year. We have inflation at the highest in 40 years. Our banking system is crashing worst than in 2008. We are in a global financial crisis and you want a significant raise? I don't see any private company giving anywhere near a 60% raise.

Name: Miriam Mata	Email: rcmata@twc.com	Zip: 96782
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 14, 2023 @ 06:20 PM

Testimony:
Aloha Honolulu City Council Members,
I am writing this letter in opposition to the absurd 64% pay raises for the City Council members.
Who, in this current day and age who consider and worst yet, accept a 64% pay raise?
The HSTA received a 14% pay raise over four years, yet there is a proposal for an instant pay raise of 64%!
Council members, please remember who you represent - hard working families with economic issues, retirees who live on a fixed income, younger people working for minimum wages, etc., etc.
I am asking for the Council members with a conscience to do the "right thing".
Re-negotiate for a 10%, 15%, or 20% pay raise but certainly not 64%!
Mahalo,
Miriam Mata, a Voter for many years

Name: Caro Williams	Email: Overtaxed808@gmail.com	Zip: 96782
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 14, 2023 @ 07:21 PM

Testimony:
City Council Members,

I strongly oppose ALL pay raises. You eagerly and "HUMBLY" campaigned asking for our trust and votes to allow you to serve and be the voices of our people and community. IT IS SHAMEFUL to even CONSIDER "Quietly and Humbly" ACCEPTING THAT MUCH TAX DOLLARS from the struggling people of Hawai'i.

Your positions should not be based on your personal welfare and opinion. You campaigned to serve the people of Hawaii, NOT to serve yourselves. Lead by example, not by personal gains.

Do what's right and reject the unjustifiable pay raise. Anything over 5% will hurt us. I've been made aware that the current budget accounts for only 4% so where do you plan on getting the rest of 60% from? Will it creatively and quietly be incorporated into raising residential's property taxes? When and How will we be provided any form of permanent tax relief to offset your pay raises??

It's disheartening that majority of the kama'ainas can no longer keep up with the over inflated cost of life, everything is beyond affordable!!! HOW can you "humbly" accept that much tax dollars when you know it will HURT US? Refocus and do the right thing for Hawai'i. This is so demoralizing.

Calvin Say,

Your admin's response letter states, that you're "truly humbled by the opportunity to serve at any salary." The letter also acknowledges the responsibility you have is "to improve the quality of life for our communities." Where is this improvement? Don't you see there's homeless encampments everywhere, don't you know that our prisons are overcrowded due to increase crime? Have you seen some of your constituents' electric bills yet? Have you shopped for groceries and necessities recently?

Your letter states that you, "trust the salary commission to do its duty" (of course you do, you've appointed them) and you say "their duty is to provide recommendations." Have you forgotten your duties? Your constituents has trusted you to do "your duty and to recommend" what's best for your community and it's people. How is this helping the people? What happened to your statement of being "truly humbled by the opportunity to serve at any salary?"

Val Okimoto,

As our new council member, You campaigned, "A fresh voice for our future." We've been misled by your interview with Honolulu Civil Beat's Q&A article dated 9/8/22.

You quoted, "The people of District 8 are looking for a fresh leader that will provide a vision we can all believe in – not politics as usual. If elected, I will serve as a humble voice for my community while paving the way for an affordable, exciting future for Honolulu." What have you done in 6 months to justify your increase? How are you serving your humble voice for your community when there's no involvement and you do not have the decency to acknowledge letters you've received or calls you don't answer? How is that, "not politics as usual" and "a fresh voice and a fresh leader?"

How does accepting this raise relate to serving your community while paving a way for an affordable future?? Affordable for WHO? YOURSELF? We're very disappointed and dissatisfied with your service. It is time to refocus and do the right thing.

Council member Andria and Augie,

We can clearly see and believe that you truly understand the struggles and hardships that we live with day to day and that you sincerely care for Hawai'i and its people. Thank you for your leadership and doing the most difficult yet Honorable and Respectful thing for us, for our kupunas and our keikis by Loudly and Proudly rejecting the raises. Mahalo and lots of Aloha to Both of you!

Name: Elena Jones	Email: elenaj1966@outlook.com	Zip: 96782
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 14, 2023 @ 07:22 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Council Members:

Please faithfully discharge the duties of your office regardless of personal considerations and put resolutions 23-081 and 23-082 on the council's agenda to be voted on by each council member. The public interest should always be your primary concern. Moreover, the public deserves the right to know where each of you stands.

The Salary Commission has done a great disservice to the public when it voted for excessive pay salaries. The public has to pay for these unwarranted raises for the city council either by paying more taxes and fees or by sacrificing funding for public services and programs. This is not the time for excessive raises when the public is struggling to make ends meet with higher food costs and property taxes etc. So many are fearful of being homeless and not having enough to eat.

By amending the bill to remove an increase in salaries, these savings could be used for the benefit of the public such as basic public services that have been lacking. For example, keeping our streets clean by removing trash/ bulk items and cutting the weeds. The city has neglected these two basic services. There are so many other public uses for this money instead of paying for raises that benefit only the individual.

Benefits and perks of the job such as car allowances, staff, and gifts of travel, etc. were not included as compensation when determining raises. In addition, the salary commission failed to recognize that the council members are part-time and that some have other jobs. The salary commission should be dissolved because it does not serve the public interest.

Please amend the Bill to remove salary increases or include resolutions 23-081 and 23-082 on the Council's Agenda.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Elena Jones

Name: BRANDON GOODE	Email: BRANDONCGOODE@YAHOO.COM	Zip: 96789
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 14, 2023 @ 08:52 PM

Testimony:

Taxes are going up all around. Schools are horribly underfunded. Tax dollars are being wasted left and right. Pay increases should not be happening until the people are taken care of.

Name: Curtis Sakamoto	Email: csakamoto68@hotmail.com	Zip: 96789
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 14, 2023 @ 10:37 PM

Testimony:

I strongly oppose the outrageous 64% pay increases. I have never been involved in government but felt that I needed to state my frustration over this absurd increase which will ultimately be paid by Hawaii taxpayers. This seems to be blatantly against the best interests of the public at a time when everyone is struggling with the high cost of living in Hawaii and high inflation. It's so unfortunate to hear about these obscene pay increases that were proposed by the salary commissioners who were appointed by the very city officials that they are recommending pay raises for. It appears from an outsider looking in to be some sort of conflict of interest. Nonetheless, I feel a more modest pay increase of 3% - 4% would be fair and in line with the current budget.

As a Hawaii taxpayer who has never participated in any government processes, I felt it necessary to finally get involved in hopes that our government officials will listen and do the right thing and start to restore my trust in government. If this gets passed, it'll be detrimental for many years and decades to come and possibly in perpetuity. You have a chance to do the right thing for the people you serve & represent. Please reject the excessive increase and opt for a more modest and reasonable one instead.

Name: Nataile Iwasa	Email: iwasajunk@mail.com	Zip: 96825
Representing: Self	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: May 14, 2023 @ 10:45 PM

Name: Clyde Hashimoto	Email: chashimoto@hawaii.rr.com	Zip: 96818-5334
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 14, 2023 @ 11:08 PM

Testimony:

I do not agree with the excessive proposed raise. I will not vote for any person that accepts this raise. Even if this means voting Republican.

Name: Kim Tomey	Email: kimtomey@aol.com	Zip: 96744
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Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 14, 2023 @ 11:31 PM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>I wish I could support the exorbitant pay raises for the Mayor, City Council Members, Deputies, M.E. (\$363,000!!!!), Police Chief, Fire Chief and other City & County employees. I understand and appreciate how very hard they work (especially my CM Esther Kiaaina).</p> <p>But, there are thousands and thousands of local residents who work just as hard. My son and daughter-in-law, for example. They work 6 days a week just to barely get by. Family, yard work, home maintenance, grocery shopping, errands, and entertainment all compete for time on their one day off. Vacations are only a dream. They aren't getting anything like a 64% (or \$20,000/year) pay raise and their jobs don't include perks like a \$350/month car stipend or a free trip to Switzerland.</p> <p>This anticipated pay raise is particularly galling coming at a time when local people are reeling from staggering increases in the cost of electricity. And those lucky enough to own a home are facing property tax increases of almost 40% in the last 2 years in some neighborhoods.</p> <p>The excessive size of these anticipated raises comes as slap in the face to many folks of modest means who have never received a pay raise higher than a single digit percentage point in their lives. It's almost as though some CMs have forgotten (if they ever knew) how ordinary people live.</p> <p>I can't help but be amazed at the tone-deafness of this proposal. City Council Members and high-level department heads should keep in mind that accepting this raise will rob them of any credibility in the future when the City & County claims it can't afford to spend money on things that benefit local residents. For example, when the Department of Budget and Fiscal Services argues that it cannot afford to give property owners more than a one-time \$300 property tax credit after they've had 2 boom years of increased revenue.</p> <p>Instead of a pay raise, I propose a LIMIT on salaries.</p>		
Name: Debra Mun	Email: mundlee007@gmail.com	Zip: 96816-4201
Representing: Self	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: May 15, 2023 @ 12:38 AM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>Opposed to council members giving themselves a 60%+ raise for a part time job. Even if they were to change it to a full time job, no one serving the public should be giving themselves a 60%+ raise. If they are going to raise their own pay that much, then they should lower our property taxes similarly.</p>		
Name: Karen McLeod	Email: loli79@gmail.com	Zip: 96814
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 15, 2023 @ 01:13 AM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>NO for raises. You work for city/state/federal = lesser pay than private sector with better benefits. I work in the private sector and our benefits are mediocre and you still make more \$ than me; I have a master's degree.</p> <p>Take a 5% pay increase max, which is lucky in the private sector. Learn to live with that wage and then maybe you might learn/negotiate/enact more common sense laws, living on a typical wage in Hawaii. If you want a 50-75% increase in your salary, justify it to the city/state voters and allow us to determine if what you do for the people deserves you the right for such a high increase in pay which benefits are based and you will continue to reap the rewards once you leave office. Auwe to you and your lack of sense. Who doesn't think their work is worth more but very few are able to vote for themselves to get such an increase.</p>		
Name: Beian Shono	Email: brian.shono@gmail.com	Zip: 96822
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 15, 2023 @ 05:54 AM
<p>Testimony:</p>		

Pay raise for part-time Council Members are totally ludicrous. Remember you are public servants like other City employees and should have the same pay increases as them.

Name: Hope AhLoo	Email: tweetiepie_hi@yahoo.com	Zip: 96782
Representing: Self	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: May 15, 2023 @ 06:51 AM

Testimony:
Everyone deserves a raise but one must get real and not live in a fantasy world. Someone who works part time hours in an office environment certainly does not justify a 64% raise. What are the chances of getting a life altering injury from an office setting? The people who physically put their lives on the line everyday are the ones who deserve a big raise. Those are the people that go out and risk their lives to serve and protect knowing they are held accountable for every move and decision they make to carry out their duty. When applying for any employment, everyone is fully aware of the requirements, expectations and salaries that go along with the job position. Looking at the bigger picture, NO ONE has ever received a raise more than 15%. We all have suffered and sacrificed to live in paradise. Before you approve a RIDICULOUS raise for yourself, think of all the other people who have asked for a mere 4-10% raise and was denied yet they still do their job. If you're so sure you deserve that raise, then be transparent and let the public see who's voting to accept. There's so many projects still needs to be completed and yet you want to pay yourself first. Do the right thing for everyone concerned because then we will all see who is for the people and who is for themselves.

Name: Darlene Yoshioka	Email: daryosh118@gmail.com	Zip: 96734
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 15, 2023 @ 07:18 AM

Testimony:
I totally feel that the exhorbitant pay raises for the council members is TOTALLY absurd!
Their job partially is to reduce homelessness and to keep locals from moving to the mainland!
But, these pay raises will cause increased property taxes and increase our cost of living, thus defeating what their jobs are supposed to do! I feel that their jobs should continue to be part time because these council members are supposed to be in the Community reflecting what the general population wants, not what they THINK the people want, behind closed doors as a full time council member!

Name: Tracy Yuan	Email: ylte27@yahoo.com	Zip: 96782
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 15, 2023 @ 07:57 AM

Testimony:
I believe that taxpayer money should be allocated elsewhere than to these salary raises that are unreasonably high. I think that raises for our public officials are okay, but the rates currently proposed are not ones I agree with - especially when there is a long list of other things the money could be used for to support the people of Hawaii. Since our taxpayer money would paying for these ridiculous raises for the foreseeable future, my opinion is that putting this bill up for vote by the public is the best thing to do.

Name: Charmaine Doran	Email: Chardoranhawaii@gmail.com	Zip: 96797
Representing: Self	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: May 15, 2023 @ 08:02 AM

Testimony:
It is irresponsible to claim fiscal responsibility while also entertaining raises that exceed collective bargaining. Typically, according to Salary Commission reports, Council raises are consistent with BU13. That should continue. If the Council wants a full-time salary it should put this question to the voters. Elsewhere full-time councilmembers reject all other jobs and report to work at 8 everyday. At full-time employees don't get car allowances or mileage for their regular place of work. If the council believes this is more desirable than the current arrangement - then please propose a charter amendment.

Name: Didi Leong	Email: didi.devyani@gmail.com	Zip: 96813
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Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 15, 2023 @ 08:50 AM
Testimony: These pay raises will hurt us, our kupunas, our keikis, and our future Ohana generations for many, many years to come.		
Name: Jv Sarvis	Email: jvsarvis@gmsil.com	Zip: 96813
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 15, 2023 @ 08:54 AM
Testimony: Proposed salary raises outrageous! You have betrayed your constituents		



CountryTalkStory.com
Promoting Good & Just Governance

SPECIAL MEETING
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER
MONDAY, MAY 15, 2023
10:00 A.M.

OPPOSE

BILL 10 (2023) – **LEGISLATIVE BUDGET FOR FY 2024**. Approving the Legislative Budget for the fiscal year July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. (Bill passed second reading and public hearing held 4/19/23)

Chair Tommy Waters, District 4
Vice Chair Esther Kia'aina, District 3
Floor Leader Radiant Cordero, District 7
Andria Tupola, District 1
Matt Weyer, District 2
Calvin Say, District 5
Tyler Dos Santos-Tam, District 6
Val Okimoto, District 8
Augie Tulba, District 9

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice-Chair Kia'aina, and Council Members,

I have many concerns relating to Bill 10. Specifically, the City Council Chair or the Budget or Legal affairs Committee Chair must ALLOW RESOLUTION 23-81 & RESOLUTION 23-82 relating to City Council salary increases must be introduced for due process and public participation. As identified above, only two council members (**in bold**) are in support of allowing public participation.

At this point, the rest of the Honolulu City Council leadership is seen as stonewalling and dissing public participation in a very important issue.

The issue of this salary increase at about 64% should be fairly and equitably addressed in the public square

If the Council does not respond to the Salary Commission's Recommendations, all the pay raises will automatically be in effect on July 1, 2023.

Denying public participation, acting intransigent, and stonewalling the public till time runs out is wrong.

This is wrong on all levels of a democratic government.

Chair Waters, you have publicly stated your personal reasons and rationale for this 64% salary increase. Of course, you're entitled to these thoughts. But you're occupying a public office. Elected officials cannot become autocrats in a democracy. Sure, there could be an argument that the Salary Commission is made up of "ordinary citizens representing the grassroots" but the public does not buy that. The public sees too much conflict of interest and cronyism.

Although it's not specifically spelt out in the Honolulu City Charter whether the position is "full-time" or "part-time", the intent has been focused on "**public service**". This "public service" position is generously supported with many other benefits, like each city council members has five full-time staff members, yearly expenses of \$25,000 per city council member, city council services, pension, healthcare, travel expenses, and other city hall resources and support.

You feel that attending 1). Once a month city council public hearing 2). Once-a-month council committee meetings, 3). Once-a-month Neighborhood Board Meetings, 4. Occasional special meetings and reading bills are demanding and qualify as a full-time job. But, most of the public does not agree.

As Council Chair, you have unilaterally defined this public service city council position as a full-time position and demand more monetary compensation.

However, you as **legislators must not make this unilateral decision WITHOUT giving the public an opportunity to opine on the salary increases.**

Basic accountability for an open and transparent government is a basic requisite for public officials.

Public officials must always maintain trust and integrity in government. You must allow these salary commission recommendations to be discussed publicly. Stonewalling and denying these Resolutions 23-81 and 23-82 to be heard is unethical and violates the Honolulu City Charter.

Let history remember each one of you as a consistent advocate for Public Participation & Good Governance on all issues. Let's hear the Resolutions.

Mahalo,
Choon James

TO: Members of the Budget Committee

FROM: Natalie Iwasa
808-395-3233

DATE: Monday, May 15, 2023

SUBJECT: Bill 10, Legislative Budget for Fiscal Year - **OPPOSED to 64% Councilmember Increases**

Aloha Chair Cordero and Councilmembers,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on Bill 10, which is the legislative budget for next fiscal year. It currently includes salary increases of 4% for Honolulu City Councilmembers. **A 4% to 6% or 7% increase is reasonable. A 64% increase is outrageous.**

Following are selected quotes from opinion pieces that have come out since the Commission announced recommended increases of 64% for Councilmembers. These commentaries and letters to the editor reflect public sentiment about the issue. I've also included results from a Honolulu Star-Advertiser Big Q. **Please ask Chair Waters to assign Resolutions 81 and 82 to committees, so that residents may hear each councilmember's position on this issue.**

"David Shapiro: Proposed Council raises reflect greed and cynicism," Honolulu Star-Advertiser, May 7, 2023.

Waters said he's open to placing a charter amendment before voters to decide whether they want the Council full time or part time, but that couldn't happen until 2024 and putting cart before horse is a cynical win-win for Council members.

"David Shapiro: Stop letting city leaders take easy out on pay, taxes," Honolulu Star-Advertiser, April 23, 2023.

Even with the raises and full-time designation, they'd still be free to hold outside jobs in a system rigged beyond shame.

Randy Perreira, "Column: City officials want a big raise while your ohana struggles," Honolulu Star-Advertiser, April 6, 2023.

The proposed increase would skyrocket their salaries to an obscene \$136,000. And it's still a part-time job.

Susan Buckley, "Letter: Teachers, not politicians, deserve higher pay," Honolulu Star-Advertiser, March 31, 2023.

This is an outrage and an insult.

Morris DeRego, "Letter: Vote out officials who would seek pay raises," Honolulu Star-Advertiser, March 31, 2023

Natalie Iwasa
May 15, 2023

Is anyone surprised that the Honolulu Salary Commission, appointed by the mayor and City Council, recommended giving the mayor and his department heads 12.5% raises?

It gets worse: The commission recommended a 60.2% raise for the leader of the Council.

Jackie L. Grambusch Jr., "Letter: City officials need to tackle problems, not pay," *Honolulu Star-Advertiser*, March 30, 2023.

I would like to thank them for using the recent increase in property tax revenues for their raises. All they did was "stick da finga" at the voters, telling them we do what we like in our interest.

Joe Carini, "Letter: High cost of living, plus pay hike for city leaders," *Honolulu Star-Advertiser*, March 29, 2023.

. . . and now we are subject to increasing the pay for elected officials who are supposed to help us, not the other way around.

Sylvia Kalama, "Letter: If public officials want money, get private job," *Honolulu Star-Advertiser*, March 28, 2023.

If they want to get rich, then stay in the private sector.

"Editorial: Top officials don't need big pay raise," *Honolulu Star-Advertiser*, March 27, 2023.

A whopping 60% increase in the Honolulu City Council chair's salary, and huge increases in pay for the mayor and City Council members, aren't justified under this reasoning — not when uncertainty prevails over government's ability to fill long-term needs across Oahu. The argument might be stronger for raising certain other city department heads' wages about 12.5%, as proposed, but if all are part of one package recommendation, it should be rejected.

Richard Borreca, "On Politics: Voters, heed how vote goes on huge city pay raises," *Honolulu Star-Advertiser*, March 26, 2023.

If you aren't getting a pay raise close to the Council's nearly 65%, I can see why you might be a tad upset.

"Catherine Toth Fox: It's Not Time to Give Honolulu's Leaders a Huge Pay Raise," *Civil Beat*, March 24, 2023.

So it came as a shock — maybe even a slap in the face — when news broke that the [Honolulu Salary Commission recommended substantial pay boosts](#) for the mayor, city department heads and City Council members.

Natalie Iwasa
May 15, 2023

“David Shapiro: Mayor, Honolulu City Council asking big raises from handpicked panel,”
Honolulu Star-Advertiser, March 19, 2023.

It’s for Council members that the wheel of fortune really starts ringing, with the commission arbitrarily deciding that their jobs – now designated part time – should be declared full time with executive-level pay raises.

BIG Q

Should Honolulu’s mayor/leaders get a 12.5% raise, and the City Council, a 64% hike?

May 1, 2023



B. No; excessive, unjustifiable (775 Votes)



C. OK with some raise at lower rate (212 Votes)



A. Yes; reasonable for their duties (40 Votes)



This is not a scientific poll — results reflect only the opinions of those voting.

[← PREVIOUS POLL](#)

[NEXT POLL →](#)

Comments (41)

