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### **SALARIES, ALLOWANCES AND OTHER FACILITIES TO PARLIAMENTARIANS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY**

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## **SALARIES, ALLOWANCES AND OTHER FACILITIES TO PARLIAMENTARIANS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY**

**INDIA:** Article 106 of the Constitution of India provides for salaries and allowances for Members of Parliament as may from time to time be determined by Parliament by law. Accordingly, the Salary, Allowances and Pension of Members of Parliament Act, 1954 was enacted in pursuance of the constitutional provision and it is this Act that governs the salaries, allowances and amenities for Members of Parliament.

A Joint Committee of the two Houses, constituted from time to time, frame rules, after consultation with the Government of India, to provide for matters like medical, housing, telephone facilities, etc. and for regulating the payment of daily allowance, travelling allowance and other allowances under the said Act. The Act and the rules made there under have been amended from time to time, in keeping with the changing requirements. As per the Gazette of India Notification No.17 dated 29th March,2018 issued by the Ministry of Law and Justice, the Salary, Allowances and Pension of Members of Parliament Act, 1954 has been amended vide the Finance Act, 2018. The revisions have come into force with effect from 1st April, 2018 and hereafter these will be revised after every five years commencing from 1st April, 2023 on the basis of the Cost Inflation Index.

Here is what the Members in our Parliament get:-

### **SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES:-**

Salary	:	Rs.1 Lakh per month
Daily allowance	:	Rs.2000 per day for each day of residence in Delhi on duty
Constituency allowance	:	Rs.70000 per month

Furniture allowance	:	Rs. 1 Lakh (Out of which Rs. 80000 for durables and Rs. 20000 for non-durables)
Office expense allowance:		Rs. 60000 per month (Out of which, Rs 20,000 is for meeting expenses on stationery and postage and Rs.40,000 is paid by the Lok Sabha/Rajya Sabha Secretariat to the person(s) engaged by a Member for for obtaining secretarial assistance)

There is no change in the other allowances and facilities.

**UNITED KINGDOM (House of Commons):**

Responsibility for determining Members pay was transferred to Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA) in May 2011, by the Parliamentary Standards Act 2009, as amended by the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010. Previously Members salaries were determined by a resolution of the House of Commons. **In July 2015, the IPSA confirmed that Members salaries would increase to £74,000 per annum from 8 May 2015 but it provided that from 1 April 2016, the salary would be adjusted by the “rate of annual changes in public sector average earnings”, which it defined as “the seasonally adjusted three month average change in public sector weekly earnings ending in the previous October compared with the same period a year earlier”. On 1 March 2018, IPSA announced that the annual salary of a Member will increase by 1.8% to £77,379 per annum from 1 April 2018.**

**Members expenses:** Under section 5 of the Parliamentary Standards Act 2009, the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA) has a statutory duty

to prepare and regularly review and revise the allowances scheme for Members of Parliament. It came into force the day after the 2010 General Election and is revised annually. In fulfilling that statutory duty it is required to consult:

- (a) The Speaker of the House of Commons,
- (b) The Committee on Standards in Public Life,
- (c) The Leader of the House of Commons,
- (d) Any Committee of the House nominated by the Speaker,
- (e) Members of the House of Commons,
- (f) The Review Body on Seniors Salaries,
- (g) Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs,
- (h) The Treasury, and
- (i) Any other person the IPSA considers appropriate.

The IPSA is also responsible for paying expenses under the Scheme it prepares. In May 2016, IPSA launched a consultation entitled Review of the MPs' Scheme of Business Costs and Expenses and IPSA's publication policy. The consultation ran until 24 October 2016. IPSA described it as "the first comprehensive review of the Scheme since 2011." IPSA's tenth edition of the Scheme of MPs' Business Costs and Expenses 2018-19 is in effect for the 2018-19 financial year. Its provisions came into force on 1 April 2018.

The main expense budgets provided in IPSA's scheme and the maximum amounts that Members can claim in 2018-19 are set out below:

**Accommodation Expenses (Annual):-**

<b>London</b>	<b>area</b>	<b>(rent)</b>
£22,850		
<b>Non-London</b>	<b>area</b>	<b>(rent)</b>
£15,940		

**Own home** (to cover costs such as utility bills and Council tax)  
£5,150

**Hotel accommodation**

Members choosing not to rent accommodation can claim for hotel accommodation, within the following limits (unchanged since 2011/12)

London Area £175

per night

Non-London area £150

per night

**Caring responsibility (per dependent Up to 3 only):-**

£5,345 (Annual)

MPs will be deemed to have caring responsibilities where they:

- a. have parental responsibility for a dependent child of up to the age of 18, or up to the age of 18 if in full-time education; or
- b. are the primary care takers for a family Member in receipt of one of the following benefits:
  - I. Attendance Allowance;
  - II. Disability Living Allowance at the middle or highest rate for personal care;
  - III. Personal Independence Payment at the standard or enhanced rate for daily living; or
  - IV. Constant Attendance Allowance at or above the maximum rate with an Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit, or basic (full day) rate with a War Disablement Pension.

**London Area Living Payment** (per financial year):- £3,940

London Area MPs may claim the London Area Living Payment (LALP). It was increased first time in 2017/18 after its introduction in 2010/11.

**London Area Living Payment (addition)** (per financial year):- £1,395

London Area MPs outside Greater London can claim additional LALP.

**Staffing Expenditure (Annual):-**

London Area MPs	£164,460
Non-London Area MPs	£153,620

The maximum budget for Staffing Expenditure is based on Members employing four full-time equivalent Members of staff.

During the course of 2017/18 changes were applied to the rules on employing family Members. From the outset of the Scheme in 2010, MPs have been able to employ one “connected party”. Since the general election of 2017, IPSA has no longer paid the salaries and other costs of any new employees who are connected parties.

**Office Costs Expenditure (Annual):-**

London Area MPs	£27,660
Non-London Area MPs	£24,880

Office Costs Expenditure may only be claimed for the performance of parliamentary functions. It may not be claimed for:

- a. any alcoholic drinks;
- b. stationery provided by the House of Commons;
- c. newsletters;
- d. funding any material, excluding a website, that contains a party political logo or emblem;
- e. Personal accountancy or tax advice.

Under the Scheme, MPs can claim office costs whether or not they rent an office; and they can claim for more than one office, as long as they stay within budget.

**Start-up Supplement: -** £6,000

A new Start-up Expenditure was introduced in 2011/12, to meet the costs of setting up one or more constituency offices as a new MP. From the

2017/18, it is a supplement to the office costs budget and is available “to new MPs for the duration of the financial year in which they were elected”. If an MP is elected in the last three months of a financial year, IPSA “will consider rolling forward all or part” of the supplement to the following financial year.

**Winding-up Costs:-**

London Area MPs	£57,150
Non-London Area MPs	£53,950

Winding-Up budget is designed to meet the cost of completing the outstanding parliamentary functions of a person who ceases to be an MP. It is available to former MPs after a general election either because they have not contested, or because they have lost the election. It is also available to those who cease to be MPs during a term of Parliament. This is payable for two months after a person ceases to be a Member. It has remained unchanged since 2014/15.

**Loss of Office Payment:-**

An interim resettlement payment for Members who lost their seat at the General Election, scheduled for 7 May 2015, was introduced by the Fourth Edition (covering the financial year 2012/13) of IPSA’s Scheme. From the beginning of the 2015 Parliament, the interim arrangement has been replaced by a permanent Loss of Office Payment. MPs will be eligible to receive a Loss of Office Payment if they lose their seat at a General Election. The amount of the Loss of Office Payment will be equal to double the prevailing statutory redundancy entitlement.

The IPSA Scheme stipulates that Members have to contest the same seat that they represented on the day before dissolution. Members are also required to have made arrangements for their staff redundancy notices; for repaying outstanding debts to IPSA; for submitting expense claims before they receive the Loss of Office Payment; and carrying out necessary administrative tasks.

### **Travel and subsistence:**

Travel and Subsistence claims may be made for the costs of travel, and travel-related subsistence incurred by MPs or others, which are in support of the MP's parliamentary functions. MPs are allowed to claim for journeys by public transport, private transport, taxis and hire cars; and that IPSA will pay claims for travel and subsistence for the following categories of journey:

- a. Journeys between Westminster and anywhere in MPs' constituencies, except, in the case of London Area MPs, their residences.
- b. Journeys anywhere in MPs' constituencies, except between their residences and constituency offices;
- c. Extended UK travel;
- d. Journeys to and from other states in Europe. (No other international travel may be claimed, except under the circumstances described in paragraph 10.11, when Parliament is recalled)

The Scheme's provisions for extended travel cover travel outside the constituency and non routine journeys between the constituency and Westminster or a London Area residence.

The IPSA Scheme makes provision for travel by Member's staff and family Members. Staff can "claim for the same travel costs as MPs, with the exception of journeys to and from other states in Europe".

Where MPs have caring responsibilities, they may claim for journeys by their dependants between their constituency and London. MPs may also claim for journeys by their spouse or partner between their constituency and London. Where a dependant needs assistance from a carer other than an MP's spouse or partner while travelling, the cost of the carer's journey may also be claimed. MPs' dependants and spouses or partners, and other carers must be registered



with IPSA before travel can be claimed. The Scheme provides for subsistence expenses in certain circumstances, for Members, for carers and for staff.

Specific provision is made for late sittings of the House of Commons:

If MPs have been working after 10 pm on parliamentary matters they may claim for a taxi to their London Area residence or for an overnight stay in a hotel. Claims for hotels have a ceiling of £175 per night for each such stay. If in exceptional circumstances, MP's are unable to find a hotel for £175 or less, they may claim for the total cost, provided they have evidence to show why it was not possible to find a hotel within the price limit.

**Recall of Parliament:** IPSA will, in the event of a recall of Parliament during Recess, pay claims for any reasonable travel by MPs and their spouses, partners or dependants to Westminster or their London Area residence. This includes travel from abroad to the UK and, if necessary, return travel to the foreign location, from which they were recalled. MPs will be expected to claim for standard class or equivalent fares unless they have no alternative, or there is a more cost-effective option available.

**Expenditure during a general election:** The Scheme sets out the rules that would apply to claims for expenses in the period when Parliament is dissolved.

**Miscellaneous Expenses:** Additional expenses to cover the following circumstances are payable subject to conditions: Disability assistance; Security assistance; Insurance; Contingency payments; Necessary financial assistance.

**Income Tax: MPs pay the same rates of taxation and National Insurance as any other employed person.**

**Pension:** The Parliamentary Contributory Pension Fund (the PCPF) is a statutory defined benefit scheme. The scheme in place until May 2015 provided benefits based on final salary. After the 2015 General Election, a new section was introduced for MPs, providing benefits on the basis of Career

Average Revalued Earnings (CARE). Members elected in 2015 automatically became Members of this section unless covered by transitional protection in the Final Salary Section. Both MPs and the Exchequer contribute to this scheme. Pension payments are deducted from Members salaries before tax and National Insurance is calculated, making it a tax efficient way to save, and the Exchequer also makes contributions. Members contribute 11.09% of pensionable salary and the Exchequer meets the balance of the cost of providing their retirement benefits. The contribution rate is assessed every three years and may change if the cost of providing benefits from the Scheme changes. Membership of the MPs Pension Scheme provides valuable benefits like a pension for life and Pension benefits for dependants including children.

**House of Lords: Members of the House of Lords, unlike the Commoners are unsalaried.** They do not receive salaries or other employment benefits, including pensions. There are two exceptions: a few office holders receive a salary, and some Ministers receive a salary from the Government. Attendance at the House of Lords is voluntary, but Members who do not receive a salary are eligible to receive daily attendance allowances and, within certain limits, some travel expenses they incur in fulfilling their parliamentary duties. Members who receive a Ministerial or Office Holders' salary are not entitled to claim the allowances based on attendance.

**Attendance:** Allowances and expenses payable to unsalaried Members are linked to attendance at:

- 1) sittings in the chamber of the House when formal business takes place;
- 2) sittings of the Grand Committee;
- 3) voting in a division;
- 4) meetings of committees and sub-committees of the House (providing the Member's attendance is recorded in the minutes);

- 5) meetings as a Member of the Board of the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST);
- 6) Meetings of the Ecclesiastical Committee and the Audit Committee.
- 7) Meetings of the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament.

The 'Number of Days Attended' reflects the official record of those days when a Member attended a sitting in the chamber of the House when formal business took place, attended a sitting of the Grand Committee, voted in a division, or attended a select committee of the House. Days on which a Member worked on Parliamentary business without attending a public sitting of the House, or a committee, are not included in the total.

The 'Number of Days Away from Westminster' reflects those days individual Members participated in mandated Parliamentary business away from Westminster, which qualified for the reduced daily allowance of £150 for each day of the visit, and for which they made a claim.

**Daily allowance:** Unsalariated Members who certify that they have undertaken parliamentary work are entitled to claim a daily allowance of £305 for each qualifying day of attendance at Westminster. A Member may, on a day by day basis, elect to claim the reduced allowance at the daily rate of £153. The reduced daily allowance may be claimed in respect of participation in certain other mandated parliamentary business away from the House. A Member who has claimed a daily allowance for a qualifying day of attendance at Westminster may not also claim the reduced daily allowance in respect of parliamentary business away from Westminster on the same day.

**Travel expenses:** Members who live outside Greater London can recover travel expenses for journeys between a registered residential address and Westminster by a reasonable route to enable them to attend sittings of the House. A maximum of one journey in each direction may be claimed for each

day of attendance. Members can recover the cost of fares incurred by them for travel by rail, sea, air, bus, or the costs of travel by private car, motorcycle or bicycle after submitting tickets or receipts.

**Rail:** Members are entitled to be reimbursed for rail travel up to the maximum cost of a standard anytime ticket for the same type of ticket as actually bought, e.g. if a return ticket is bought the maximum reimbursable would be the cost of a standard anytime return and not the cost of two standard anytime single tickets. Members are expected to take advantage of any available cheap ticket facilities. They are encouraged to book tickets through the Travel Office which is located in the Palace of Westminster.

**Air:** Members are entitled to be reimbursed for the cost of a business class ticket. Members are expected to take advantage of any available cheap ticket facilities. They are encouraged to book tickets through the Travel Office which is located in the Palace of Westminster.

**Taxis:** -As an alternative to parking costs a contribution towards the cost of taxis may be claimed for journeys from a Member's registered residential address outside Greater London to the UK airport, station, coach stop or port serving that area. The contribution is limited to a maximum of £20 for each day of attendance.

**Recall of Parliament:** Members may recover the costs necessarily incurred in attending a sitting of the House, including the cost of travel from overseas if the House is recalled during parliamentary recess.

**Free Postage Costs:** Prepaid envelopes and postcards are available for use by Members for correspondence on House of Lords business. The costs shown include the postage and envelope costs.

**Spouse, Civil Partner and Children's Travel:** Members who live outside Greater London may recover travel expenses for journeys undertaken by their

spouse or civil partner between the Member's registered residential address and Westminster. This must be in connection with attendance of the spouse or civil partner at a parliamentary occasion, i.e. a sitting of the House, committee of the House or another parliamentary event taking place on a sitting day. Members may also recover the costs incurred by each of their children, up to the age of 18 (and children over 18 still in full time secondary education, until the end of the academic year in which their 18th birthday falls) on the same basis. Reimbursement of travel costs is limited to six round trips each per calendar year. Contribution towards parking or taxis is limited to £20 per day.

#### **UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:**

Article I, Section 6, of the U.S. Constitution, states that the compensation of Members of Congress shall be "ascertained by law, and paid out of the Treasury of the United States." Additionally, the Twenty-Seventh Amendment states; "No law, varying the compensation for the services of the Senators and Representatives, shall take effect, until an election of Representatives shall have intervened." This amendment was submitted to the States on September 25, 1789, along with 11 other proposed amendments, 10 of which were ratified and became the Bill of Rights. It was not ratified until May 7, 1992. Since 1983, Member salaries have been funded in a permanent appropriations account. The most recent pay adjustment for Members of Congress was in January 2009.

**Methods for Member Pay Adjustment:** There are three basic ways to adjust:

1. Specific legislation was enacted to adjust Member pay prior to 1968. It has been used periodically since, most recently affecting pay for 1991.

2. The second method by which Member pay can be increased is pursuant to recommendations from the President, based on those made by a quadrennial salary commission.
3. The third method by which the salary of Members can be changed is by annual adjustments. Prior to 1990, the pay of Members, and other top-level federal officials, was tied to the annual comparability increases provided to General Schedule (GS) federal employees. This procedure was established in 1975.

The Ethics Reform Act of 1989 changed the method by which the annual adjustment is determined for Members and other senior officials. This procedure employs a formula based on changes in private sector wages and salaries as measured by the Employment Cost Index (ECI). The annual adjustment automatically goes into effect unless

1. Congress statutorily prohibits the adjustment;
2. Congress statutorily revises the adjustment; or
3. The annual base pay adjustment of GS employees is established at a rate less than the scheduled adjustment for Members, in which case Members would be paid the lower rate.

Under this revised method, annual adjustments were accepted 13 times (adjustments scheduled for January 1991, 1992, 1993, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2008, and 2009) and denied 15 times (adjustments scheduled for January 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1999, 2007, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018).

Although discussion of the Member pay adjustment sometimes occurs during consideration of annual appropriations bills, these bills do not contain funds for the annual salaries or pay adjustment for Members. Nor do they contain language authorizing an increase. The use of appropriations bills as vehicles

for provisions prohibiting the automatic annual pay adjustments for Members developed by custom. A provision prohibiting an adjustment to Member pay could be offered to any bill, or be introduced as a separate bill.

**Compensation:** The compensation for most Senators and Representatives is \$174,000. These levels have remained unchanged since 2009. Subsequent scheduled annual adjustments were denied. Members of Congress receive salaries only during the terms for which they are elected. They do not receive salaries beyond their terms of office. Members of Congress do not receive additional compensation for service on committees, and they are not eligible for housing or per diem allowances for expenses incurred in Washington, DC. Finally, neither Members of Congress nor their families are exempt from the repayment of student loans. Although both the House and Senate have established student loan repayment programmes for employee recruitment and retention purposes, these programmes are subject to a number of regulations—including service agreements and annual and lifetime benefit maximums—and Members of Congress are not eligible to participate.

**Outside Earned Income Limits:** Permissible “outside earned income” for Representatives and Senators is limited to 15% of the annual rate of basic pay for level II of the Executive Schedule. According to the House Ethics Committee and Senate Ethics Committee, the 2016 limit is \$27,495. Certain types of outside earned income, however, are prohibited.

**Prohibition on Honoraria:** Representatives and Senators are prohibited from accepting honoraria. The acceptance of honoraria was prohibited from 1991.

**Health and Life Insurance Provisions:** Public Law (P.L.) 111-148 states that the only health plans available to Members of Congress and certain congressional staff are those plans created under the act or offered through an

exchange established under the act. Pursuant to the regulations implementing this section, effective from January 1, 2014, Members may elect to be covered through the DC Health Link. In addition, the Office of the Attending Physician provides emergency medical assistance for Members of Congress, Justices of the Supreme Court, staff, and visitors. Additional services are offered to Members who choose to enroll for an annual fee (\$611 in 2018). The office is led by a medical officer from the U.S. Navy, a tradition begun in 1928. Members also are eligible to participate in the Federal Employees Group Life Insurance Program. The amount of coverage for personal insurance is determined by a formula based on the coverage elected.

**Social Security Participation and Other Retirement Provisions:** Prior to 1984, neither federal civil service employees nor Members of Congress paid Social Security taxes, nor were they eligible for Social Security benefits. Members of Congress and other federal employees were instead covered by a separate pension plan called the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS). The 1983 amendments to the Social Security Act required federal employees first hired after 1983 to participate in Social Security. These amendments also required all Members of Congress to participate in Social Security as of January 1, 1984, regardless of when they first entered the Congress. As the CSRS was not designed to coordinate with Social Security, Congress directed the development of a new retirement plan for federal workers. The result was the Federal Employees Retirement System Act of 1986.

Members of Congress first elected in 1984 or later are covered automatically under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS). All Senators and those Representatives serving as Members prior to September 30, 2003, may decline this coverage. Representatives entering office on or after



September 30, 2003, cannot elect to be excluded from such coverage. Members who were already in Congress when Social Security coverage went into effect could either remain in CSRS or change their coverage to FERS. Members are now covered under one of four different retirement arrangements:

- CSRS and Social Security;
- The “CSRS Offset” plan, which includes both CSRS and Social Security, but with CSRS contributions and benefits reduced by Social Security contributions and benefits;
- FERS; or
- Social Security alone.

Congressional pensions, like those of other federal employees, are financed through a combination of employee and employer contributions. All Members pay Social Security payroll taxes equal to 6.2% of the Social Security taxable wage base (\$128,400 in 2018). Members first covered by FERS prior to 2013 also pay 1.3% of full salary to the Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund (CSRDF). Members of Congress first covered by FERS in 2013 contribute 3.1% of pay to the CSRDF. Members of Congress first covered by FERS after 2013 contribute 4.4% of pay to the CSRDF. Members covered by CSRS Offset pay 1.8% of the first \$128,400 of salary in 2018, and 8.0% of salary above this amount, into the CSRDF.

Under both CSRS and FERS, Members of Congress are eligible for a pension at the age of 62 if they have completed at least five years of service. Members are eligible for a pension at age 50 if they have completed 20 years of service, or at any age after completing 25 years of service. The amount depends on years of service and the average of the

highest three years of salary. By law, the starting amount of a Member's retirement annuity may not exceed 80% of his or her final salary.

**Income Tax:** Previously, Members were allowed to deduct, for income tax purposes, living expenses up to \$3,000 per annum, while away from their congressional districts or home states. This was eliminated in December 2017.

**Member's Representational Allowance (MRA): Supporting Personnel, Office Expenses, Travel to the District, and Mail for Members of the House:** The Member's Representational Allowance (MRA) is available to support Representatives in their official and representational duties. The MRA may be used for official expenses including, for example, staff, travel, mail, office equipment, district office rental, stationery, and other office supplies. The MRA is also subject to a number of restrictions. For example, the MRA may not be used to defray any personal or campaign-related expenses. A Member is also prohibited from using campaign funds (except where authorized by the Committee on Ethics) or committee funds to pay for expenses related to official representational duties; using an unofficial office account; accepting funds or assistance from a private source for an official activity; or using personal funds to pay for franked mail.

A Member is responsible for personally paying for any expenses that are in excess of the authorized MRA level or that are not reimbursable under regulations of the Committee on House Administration. The MRA for each Representative is calculated based on three components:

***Personnel***, which is the same for each Member (\$944,671 in 2017);

***Office expenses***, which vary among Members due to variations in the distance between a Member's district and Washington, DC, and the cost of General Services Administration office rental space in the district;

*Official (franked)* mail, which varies among Members based on the number of non-business addresses in the district. Requirements on the use of franked mail, including mass mailings, are established in statute, Rules of the House, and regulations of the Commission on Congressional Mailing Standards (also known as the Franking Commission).

The three components are combined and result in a single MRA authorization for each Representative that can be used to pay for any type of official expense. For example, each Representative can choose how much to allocate to travel versus personnel or supplies. The MRA for each Member is authorized from January 3 of each year through January 2 of the following year. These allowances are authorized in statute and regulated and adjusted by the Committee on House Administration. The MRA is funded in the House “Salaries and Expenses” account in the annual legislative branch appropriations bills. All MRA expenditures are reported in the quarterly Statement of Disbursements of the House.

**Limitation on Number of Employees Hired by the MRA:** Each Member may use the MRA to employ no more than 18 permanent employees. A Member may employ up to four additional employees if they fall into one of the following categories: Part-time employees, Shared employees, Interns receiving pay, Employees on leave without pay and Temporary employees.

**The Senators’ Official Personnel and Office Expense Account (SOPOEA): Supporting Personnel, Office Expenses, and Mail for U.S. Senators:** The Senators’ Official Personnel and Office Expense Account (SOPOEA) is available to assist Senators in their official and representational duties. The allowance is provided for the fiscal year. The SOPOEA for each Senator is calculated based on three components, including:

*The administrative and clerical assistance allowance* varies by State population. The preliminary figures in the FY2018 Senate report show this allowance ranges from \$2,587,374 for a Senator representing a State with a population under 5 million to \$4,112,084 for those with a State population of 28 million or more.

*The legislative assistance allowance* is the same for all. As per the FY2018 Senate report, legislative assistance of the SOPOEA is \$482,958; and

*The office expense allowance* varies by State depending on the distance between Washington, DC, and the home State, the population of the State, and the official (franked) mail allocation. According to the FY2018 Senate report, the office expense allowance component ranges from \$122,428 to \$457,275.

The three components result in a single SOPOEA authorization for each Senator that can be used to pay for official expense. For example, each Senator can choose how much to allocate to travel versus personnel or supplies, although additional limits pertain to spending on franked mail. Mass mailings may not exceed \$50,000 per fiscal year, and additional official mail regulations may be established in statute, regulations and rules of the Senate, the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, and the Senate Ethics Committee. The SOPOEA is funded within the “Contingent Expenses of the Senate” account in the annual legislative branch appropriations bills. The SOPOEA is available only to support each Senator’s official duties and may not to be used to defray any personal, political, or campaign-related expenses. Senators are responsible for the payment of any expenses that exceed the allowance.

**Other Allowances: Office Space in States, Including Mobile Office Space:** Each Senator is authorized home state office space in federal buildings. In the

event suitable office space is not available in a federal building, other office space may be secured. The cost of private space is not to exceed the highest rate per square foot charged by the General Services Administration (GSA). The aggregate square footage of office space that can be secured for a Senator ranges from 5,000 square feet, if the population of the state is less than 3 million, to 8,200 square feet, if the state's population is 17 million or more. There is no restriction on the number of offices. Each Senator may lease one mobile office for use only in the state he or she represents, subject to limitations on the terms of the lease, the maximum annual rental payment, and reimbursable operating costs. No payment may be made for expenses incurred during the 60 days preceding a contested election.

**Furniture and Furnishings in Washington, DC:** Each Senator is authorized furniture and furnishings from an approved list. Furniture and furnishings are supplied and maintained by the Architect of the Capitol (for spaces in Senate office buildings) and the Senate Sergeant at Arms (for offices in the Capitol). Additional furnishings can be purchased through the Senate stationery store.

**Furniture and Furnishings in State Offices:** Each Senator is authorized \$40,000 for state office furniture and furnishings for one or more offices, if the aggregate square footage of office space does not exceed 5,000 square feet. The base authorization is increased by \$1,000 for each authorized additional incremental increase in office space of 200 square feet. Pursuant to the FY2000 Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, this allowance automatically increases at the beginning of each Congress to reflect inflation. Furniture and furnishings remain GSA property.

**Office Equipment in Washington, DC, and State Offices:** Each Senator may use certain basic office equipment allocated in accordance with the population

of the state he or she represents and other criteria established by the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration.

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