

HOUSE BILL NO. 13

INTRODUCED BY J. FITZPATRICK

BY REQUEST OF THE OFFICE OF BUDGET AND PROGRAM PLANNING

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT GENERALLY REVISING LAWS GOVERNING STATE EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION; REVISING STATE EMPLOYEE PER DIEM RATES; INCREASING THE EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTION FOR GROUP BENEFITS; SETTING THE HOURLY PAY RATE FOR LEGISLATORS IN FUTURE BIENNIA; APPROPRIATING FUNDS TO IMPLEMENT PAY AND BENEFIT REVISIONS AND PER DIEM ADJUSTMENTS; PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION; AMENDING SECTIONS 2-18-303, 2-18-501, 2-18-703, AND 5-2-301, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

**Section 1.** Section 2-18-303, MCA, is amended to read:

**"2-18-303. Procedures for administering broadband pay plan.** (1) On the first day of the first complete pay period in fiscal year ~~2024~~ 2026, each employee is entitled to the amount of the employee's base salary as it was on June 30, ~~2023~~ 2025.

(2) To the extent that the plan applies to employees within a collective bargaining unit, the implementation of the plan is a negotiable subject under 39-31-305.

(3) Effective on the first day of the first complete pay period that includes July 1, ~~2023~~ 2025, the base salary of each employee must be increased by ~~\$1.50~~ \$1.00 an hour or by 4% 2.5%, whichever is greater. Effective on the first day of the first complete pay period that includes July 1, ~~2024~~ 2026, the base salary of each employee must be increased by ~~\$1.50~~ \$1.00 an hour or by 4% 2.5%, whichever is greater. ~~All full-time employees must receive a one-time, lump-sum payment of \$1,040 in the first full pay period after April 11, 2023. All employees who are regularly scheduled to work 20 hours or more a week but less than 40 hours a week must receive a one-time, lump-sum payment of \$780 in the first full pay period after April 11, 2023. All employees who are regularly scheduled to work less than 20 hours a week must receive a one-time, lump-sum payment of \$520 in the first full pay period after April 11, 2023. These payments are applicable for fiscal year~~

1 ~~2023 only.~~

2 (4) (a) (i) A member of a bargaining unit may not receive the pay adjustment provided for in  
3 subsection (3) until the employer's collective bargaining representative receives written notice that the  
4 employee's collective bargaining unit has ratified a collective bargaining agreement.

5 (ii) If ratification of a collective bargaining agreement, as required by subsection (4)(a)(i), is not  
6 completed by the date on which a legislatively authorized pay increase is implemented, members of the  
7 bargaining unit must continue to receive the compensation that they were receiving until an agreement is  
8 ratified.

9 (b) Methods of administration consistent with the purpose of this part and necessary to properly  
10 implement the pay adjustments provided for in this section may be provided for in collective bargaining  
11 agreements.

12 (5) (a) Montana highway patrol officer base salaries must be established through the broadband  
13 pay plan. Before January 1 of each odd-numbered year, the department shall, after seeking the advice of the  
14 Montana highway patrol, conduct a salary survey to be used in establishing the base salary for existing and  
15 entry-level highway patrol officer positions. The county sheriff's offices and the city police departments located  
16 within the county seats of the following consolidated governments and counties are the labor market for  
17 purposes of the survey: Butte-Silver Bow, Cascade, Yellowstone, Missoula, Lewis and Clark, Gallatin, Flathead,  
18 and Dawson. The base salary for existing and entry-level highway patrol officer positions must then be  
19 determined by the department of justice, using the results of the salary survey and the department of justice  
20 pay plan guidelines. Base or biennial salary increases under this subsection are exclusive of and not in addition  
21 to any increases otherwise awarded to other state employees after July 1, 2006.

22 (b) To the extent that the plan applies to employees within a collective bargaining unit, the  
23 implementation of the plan is a negotiable subject under 39-31-305.

24 (c) The department of justice shall submit the salary survey to the office of budget and program  
25 planning as a part of the information required by 17-7-111.

26 (d) The salary survey and plan must be completed at least 6 months before the start of each  
27 regular legislative session."

28

1           **Section 2.** Section 2-18-501, MCA, is amended to read:

2           **"2-18-501. Meals, lodging, and transportation of persons in state service.** All elected state  
3 officials, appointed members of boards, commissions, or councils, department directors, and all other state  
4 employees must be reimbursed for meals and lodging while away from the person's designated headquarters  
5 and engaged in official state business in accordance with the following provisions:

6           (1) Except as provided under subsection (3), for travel within the state of Montana, the following  
7 provisions apply:

8           (a) ~~lodging~~ Lodging must be authorized at the actual cost of lodging and taxes on the allowable  
9 cost of lodging, ~~except as provided in subsection (3), plus \$8.25 for the morning meal, \$9.25 for the midday~~  
10 ~~meal, and \$16.00 for the evening meal except as provided in subsection (9).~~ All claims for lodging expense  
11 ~~reimbursement allowed under this section must be documented by an appropriate receipt.~~

12           (b) Except as provided in subsection (9), meals must be authorized at 70% of the standard federal  
13 rate of reimbursement for breakfast, lunch, and dinner in Montana established by the United States general  
14 services administration in accordance with the federal travel regulation.

15           (2) Except as provided in subsection (3), for travel outside the state of Montana including foreign  
16 travel, the following provisions apply:

17           (a) Lodging must be reimbursed at actual cost, not to exceed the prescribed maximum standard  
18 federal rate per day for the location involved plus taxes on the allowable cost.

19           (b) Meal reimbursement may not exceed the prescribed maximum standard federal rate per meal.

20           (3) Except as provided in subsection (9), the department of administration shall designate the  
21 locations and circumstances under which the governor, other elected state officials, appointed members of  
22 boards, commissions, or councils, department directors, and all other state employees may be authorized the  
23 actual cost of the following:

24           (a) meals, not including alcoholic beverages, when the actual cost exceeds the maximum  
25 established in subsection (2)(b); and

26           (b) lodging when the actual cost exceeds the maximum established in subsection (2)(a).

27           (4) When other than commercial, nonreceiptable lodging facilities are used by a state official or  
28 employee while conducting official state business in a travel status, the amount of \$12 is authorized for lodging

1 expenses for each day in which travel involves an overnight stay in lieu of the amount authorized in subsection  
2 (1) or (2)(a). However, when overnight accommodations are provided at the expense of a government entity,  
3 reimbursement may not be claimed for lodging.

4 (5) The actual cost of reasonable transportation expenses and other necessary business  
5 expenses incurred by a state official or employee while in an official travel status is subject to reimbursement.

6 (6) The provisions of this section may not be construed as affecting the validity of 5-2-301.

7 (7) The department of administration shall establish policies necessary to effectively administer  
8 this section for state government.

9 (8) All commercial air travel must be by the least expensive class service available.

10 (9) When the actual cost of meals exceeds the maximum standard allowed pursuant to subsection  
11 (1), the department of administration may authorize the actual cost of meals for firefighters.

12 (10) For the purposes of implementing subsection (9), the following definitions apply:

13 (a) "Firefighter" means a firefighter who is employed by the department of natural resources and  
14 conservation and who is directly involved in the suppression of a wildfire in Montana.

15 (b) "Wildfire" means an unplanned, unwanted fire burning uncontrolled and consuming vegetative  
16 fuels.

17 (11) All-EXCEPT FOR CLAIMS MADE PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (4), ALL claims for lodging expense  
18 reimbursement allowed under this section must be documented by an appropriate receipt."

19

20 **Section 3.** Section 2-18-703, MCA, is amended to read:

21 **"2-18-703. Contributions.** (1) Each agency, as defined in 2-18-601, and the state compensation  
22 insurance fund shall contribute the amount specified in this section toward the group benefits cost.

23 (2) (a) Except as provided in subsection (2)(b), for employees defined in 2-18-701 and for  
24 members of the legislature, the employer contribution for group benefits is ~~\$1,054~~ \$1,080 a month beginning  
25 January 2026 and \$1,107 a month beginning January 2027.

26 (b) For employees defined in 2-18-701 and for members of the legislature, beginning January  
27 2020 and for each succeeding month, the cost of group benefits, including both the employer and employee  
28 contributions for group benefits and health flexible spending accounts, may not exceed the monthly amount for

1 self-only coverage and coverage other than self-only that will trigger the excise tax under 26 U.S.C. 4980I,  
2 including any cost-of-living adjustments under 26 U.S.C. 4980I. This section limits contributions for group  
3 benefits only to the extent needed to avoid triggering the excise tax under 26 U.S.C. 4980I.

4 (c) Except as provided in subsection (2)(d), for employees of the Montana university system, the  
5 employer contribution for group benefits is ~~\$1,054~~ \$1,080 a month beginning January 2026 ~~JULY 2025~~ and  
6 \$1,107 a month beginning January 2027 ~~JULY 2026~~.

7 (d) For employees of the Montana university system, beginning the earlier of July 2020 or the first  
8 month in 2020 in which the excise tax under 26 U.S.C. 4980I applies, and for each succeeding month, the cost  
9 of group benefits, including both the employer and employee contributions for group benefits and health flexible  
10 spending accounts, may not exceed the monthly amount for self-only coverage and coverage other than self-  
11 only that will trigger the excise tax under 26 U.S.C. 4980I, including any cost-of-living adjustments under 26  
12 U.S.C. 4980I. This section limits contributions for group benefits only to the extent needed to avoid triggering  
13 the excise tax under 26 U.S.C. 4980I.

14 (e) If a state employee is terminated to achieve a reduction in force, the continuation of  
15 contributions for group benefits beyond the termination date is subject to negotiation under 39-31-305 and to  
16 the protections of 2-18-1205. Permanent part-time, seasonal part-time, and temporary part-time employees  
17 who are regularly scheduled to work less than 20 hours a week are not eligible for the group benefit  
18 contribution. An employee who elects not to be covered by a state-sponsored group benefit plan may not  
19 receive the state contribution. A portion of the employer contribution for group benefits may be applied to an  
20 employee's costs for participation in Part B of medicare under Title XVIII of the Social Security Act, as  
21 amended, if the state group benefit plan is the secondary payer and medicare the primary payer.

22 (3) For employees of elementary and high school districts, the employer's contributions may  
23 exceed but may not be less than \$10 a month.

24 (4) (a) For employees of political subdivisions, as defined in 2-9-101, except school districts, the  
25 employer's contributions may exceed but may not be less than \$10 a month.

26 (b) Subject to the public hearing requirement provided in 2-9-212(2)(b), the amount in excess of  
27 the base contribution of a local government's property tax levy for contributions for group benefits as  
28 determined in subsection (4)(c) is not subject to the mill levy calculation limitation provided for in 15-10-420.

1 (c) (i) Subject to subsections (4)(c)(ii) and (4)(c)(iii), the base contribution is determined by  
2 multiplying the average annual contribution for each employee on July 1, 1999, times the number of employees  
3 for whom the employer makes contributions for group benefits under 2-9-212 on July 1 of each fiscal year.

4 (ii) If a political subdivision did not make contributions for group benefits on or before July 1, 1999,  
5 and subsequently does so, the base contribution is determined by multiplying the average annual contribution  
6 for each employee in the first year the political subdivision provides contributions for group benefits times the  
7 number of employees for whom the employer makes contributions for group benefits under 2-9-212 on July 1 of  
8 each fiscal year.

9 (iii) If a political subdivision has made contributions for group benefits but has not previously levied  
10 for contributions in excess of the base contribution, the political subdivision's base is determined by multiplying  
11 the average annual contribution for each employee at the beginning of the fiscal year immediately preceding  
12 the year in which the levy will first be levied times the number of employees for whom the employer made  
13 contributions for group benefits under 2-9-212 in that fiscal year.

14 (5) Unused employer contributions for any state employee must be transferred to an account  
15 established for this purpose by the department of administration and upon transfer may be used to offset losses  
16 occurring to the group of which the employee is eligible to be a member.

17 (6) Unused employer contributions for any government employee may be transferred to an  
18 account established for this purpose by a self-insured government and upon transfer may be used to offset  
19 losses occurring to the group of which the employee is eligible to be a member or to increase the reserves of  
20 the group.

21 (7) The laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of marital status in Title 49 do not prohibit bona  
22 fide group insurance plans from providing greater or additional contributions for insurance benefits to  
23 employees with dependents than to employees without dependents or with fewer dependents."

24

25 **Section 4.** Section 5-2-301, MCA, is amended to read:

26 **"5-2-301. Compensation and expenses for members while in session.** (1) ~~Legislators are entitled~~  
27 ~~to a salary commensurate to that of the daily rate for an employee earning \$10.33 an hour when the regular~~  
28 ~~session of the legislature in which they serve is convened under 5-2-103 for those days during which the~~

1 legislature is in session. The hourly rate must be adjusted by any statutorily required pay increase For the  
2 legislators serving in the legislative session beginning in January 2027, the salary of each legislator must be  
3 determined by multiplying 80% times the average hourly wage for the state of Montana, all industry types,  
4 posted by the United States bureau of labor statistics from the most recently published quarter of employment  
5 and wages data. For the legislators serving in the legislative session beginning in January 2029 and any  
6 subsequent biennium, the salary of each legislator must be determined to be equal to the average hourly wage  
7 for the state of Montana, all industry types, posted by the United States bureau of labor statistics from the most  
8 recently published quarter of employment and wages data. The average hourly rate must be calculated by  
9 dividing the average weekly wage by 40 hours. The president of the senate and the speaker of the house must  
10 receive an additional \$5 a day in salary for those days during which the legislature is in session.

11 (2) Legislators may serve for no salary.

12 (3) Legislators are entitled to a daily allowance, 7 days a week, during a legislative session, as  
13 reimbursement for lodging, breakfast, lunch, dinner, and incidental expenses incurred in attending a session.  
14 The amount of the daily allowance is equal to the amount an employee of the executive branch of the federal  
15 government is generally entitled to receive as per diem for lodging, breakfast, lunch, dinner, and incidental  
16 expenses while away from home in the city of Helena but serving in the United States. Expense payments must  
17 stop when the legislature recesses for more than 3 days and resume when the legislature reconvenes.

18 (4) Legislators are entitled to a mileage allowance as provided in 2-18-503 for each mile of travel  
19 to the place of the holding of the session and to return to their place of residence at the conclusion of the  
20 session.

21 (5) In addition to the mileage allowance provided for in subsection (4), legislators, on submittal of  
22 an appropriate claim for mileage reimbursement to the legislative services division, are entitled to:

- 23 (a) three additional round trips to their place of residence during each regular session; and  
24 (b) additional round trips as authorized by the legislature during special session.

25 (6) Legislators are not entitled to any additional mileage allowance under subsection (4) for a  
26 special session if it is convened within 7 days of a regular session.

27 (7) The department of administration shall work with the legislative services division to offer  
28 options to legislators to receive their session salary provided for in subsection (1) over the 2-year legislative

1 term or a portion of the term. The options must be offered to all legislators in order to assist legislators to  
2 manage their income over the term. The per diem allowance and mileage as provided in this section, salary  
3 during a special session as provided in 5-3-101, and the salary during the interim as provided for in 5-2-302  
4 may not be affected."  
5

6 **NEW SECTION. Section 5. Appropriations.** (1) The following money for the indicated fiscal years is  
7 appropriated to the listed agencies to implement the adjustments provided in 2-18-303:

8 Fiscal Year 2026				
9	General Fund	State Special	Federal Special	Proprietary
10	Legislative Branch			
11	441,185	66,291		
12	Consumer Counsel			
13		18,266		
14	Judicial Branch			
15	1,012,535	48,454	812	
16	Executive Branch			
17	12,940,632	10,811,397	6,347,166	237,519
18	Montana University System			
19	9,489,860	1,569	56,860	
20	Total			
21	23,884,212	10,945,977	6,404,838	237,519
22 Fiscal Year 2027				
23	General Fund	State Special	Federal Special	Proprietary
24	Legislative Branch			
25	890,017	133,406		
26	Consumer Counsel			
27		36,925		
28	Judicial Branch			



1	2,027,488	97,184	1,624	
2	Executive Branch			
3	25,951,443	21,676,963	12,720,808	475,848
4	Montana University System			
5	19,094,292	3,177	113,925	
6	Total			
7	47,963,240	21,947,655	12,836,357	475,848

8 (2) The following money is appropriated for BOTH fiscal year 2026 and fiscal year 2027, IN EACH  
9 FISCAL YEAR, to the listed agencies to implement the adjustments provided in 2-18-501:

	General Fund	State Special	Federal Special	Proprietary
10				
11	Legislative Branch			
12	4,525	331		
13	Consumer Counsel			
14		54		
15	Judicial Branch			
16	3,395	309	15	
17	Executive Branch			
18	80,748	175,299	108,980	2,074
19	Montana University System			
20	5,521		181	
21	Total			
22	94,189	175,993	109,176	2,074

23 (3) The following money for the indicated fiscal years is appropriated to the listed agencies to  
24 implement the adjustments provided in 2-18-703:

25 Fiscal Year 2026				
	General Fund	State Special	Federal Special	Proprietary
26				
27	Legislative Branch			
28	23,026	3,650		

1	Consumer Counsel				
2		936			
3	Judicial Branch				
4	73,690	3,276	98		
5	Executive Branch				
6	800,421	662,800	291,446	14,386	
7	Montana University System				
8	932,969	156	3,569		
9	Total				
10	1,830,106	670,818	395,113	14,386	
11	Fiscal Year 2027				
12	General Fund	State Special	Federal Special	Proprietary	
13	Legislative Branch				
14	69,962	11,092			
15	Consumer Counsel				
16		2,844			
17	Judicial Branch				
18	223,903	9,480	299		
19	Executive Branch				
20	2,432,049	2,011,048	1,189,393	43,712	
21	Montana University System				
22	1,906,522	474	10,843		
23	Total				
24	4,632,436	2,034,938	1,200,535	43,712	

25 (4) The following money is appropriated for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, to the office of  
 26 budget and program planning from the designated state fund and is to be distributed to agencies when  
 27 personnel vacancies do not occur, retirement costs exceed agency resources, or other contingencies arise:

28 General Fund \$1,000,000

1           State Special Revenue           \$500,000

2           Federal Special Revenue        \$250,000

3           Proprietary Funds                \$50,000

4           (5)       There is appropriated \$75,000 from the general fund to the department of administration for the  
5 biennium beginning July 1, 2025, for a labor-management training initiative.

6

7           NEW SECTION. **Section 6. Effective date.** [This act] is effective July 1, 2025.

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