

Ask Jeff A Question

This chapter's selected question is from Mike in Big Lake. Mike asks, "What is the State Auditor's salary?"

Jeff's Answer: \$102,258 and, from my point of view, way too much. The number of employees in their respective Constitutional Offices determines the salary of the State Auditor and the Secretary of State; unless budget constraints disturb the formulary.

Frozen: 2009 salaries for elected state officers

Governor Tim Pawlenty
\$120,303

Attorney General Lori Swanson
\$114,288

Lt. Gov. Carol Molnau
\$78,197

Secretary of State Mark (ACORN) Ritchie
\$90,227

State Auditor Rebecca Otto
\$102,258

Source: Minnesota Department of Management and Budget

When Mary Kiffmeyer was Secretary of State, she was paid less than State Auditor Pat Anderson who oversaw approximately 120 employees. Mary was disconcerted because she did not think the number of employees should be used in the compensation of the Attorney General, Secretary of State and State Auditor because it does not accurately measure the level of responsibility and encourages growth of government.

The employees of the Audit Practice Division were included in the calculation of the total employees when determining the salary of State Auditor. This was the case even though 65% of the employees in the State Auditor's Office fall under the Audit Practice Division (and auditing standards require the Audit Practice Division to be managed by a Deputy State Auditor who is a licensed CPA). If the employees of the Audit Practice Division were subtracted from the State Auditor calculation, State Auditor Pat Anderson would have been paid less than Secretary of State Mary Kiffmeyer.

This system is seriously flawed because it is designed to influence and encourage the growth of government (self preservation) and discourages the reduction of government. If this fact were widely known, there would likely be enthusiastic Tea Party protests against the elected position of State Auditor.

The time for government accountability has come.

Sincerely,
Jeff Wiita, CPA