

Pay for Members of Congress

Congress is required by Article I, Section 6, of the Constitution to determine its own pay. Under the terms of a 1989 law, members of Congress automatically receive an annual cost-of-living pay increase unless they act to stop it. The annual increases are based on a formula calculated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which takes into consideration changes in private industry wages and salaries.

Rep. Wittman strongly opposes automatic pay increases for Members of Congress.

He is

a cosponsor of legislation to block the automatic pay raise for Members of Congress.

Furthermore,

He is a cosponsor of legislation that would enact a 5% pay cut for Members of Congress in fiscal year 2011.

2011

- Rep. Wittman is a cosponsor of H.R. 4720, the Taking Responsibility For Congressional Pay Act, which would cut the rate of basic pay for each Member of Congress by 5% .

- Rep. Wittman voted for H.R.5146, to provide that Members of Congress shall not receive a cost of living adjustment in pay during fiscal year 2011. This bill was signed into law.

- Rep. Wittman is a cosponsor of H.R.4255, the Stop the Automatic Pay Raise for Members of Congress in Fiscal Year 2011 Act.

2010

- Rep. Wittman voted to prevent the automatic pay increase for Members of Congress for 2010. (The pay increase was blocked when the House passed the Rule providing for consideration of the FY2009 Omnibus Appropriations Bill. The Rule provided that the pay raise would be adopted upon passage of the Rule and independent of passage of the Omnibus Bill.)

- Rep. Wittman cosponsored H.R. 156, the Stop the Congressional Pay Raise Act.

2009 and 2008

Shortly after Rep. Wittman was elected in 2007, he supported efforts to block the pay raise effective January 2009. Unfortunately, Rep. Wittman had not been elected to Congress in time to vote against the automatic pay raise effective January 2008.

Social Security and Retirement Benefits for Members of Congress

All Members of Congress have been required to pay into the Social Security System since January 1, 1984, regardless of when they first entered Congress. Under current congressional retirement plans, Members of Congress are required to contribute 6.2% of their salaries to Social Security, as well as 1.3% of their full salary into the Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund. Members of Congress are eligible for a pension at age 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 of the pension 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.

Health Benefits for Members of Congress

Members of Congress and retired Members are entitled to participate in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) under the same rules as other federal employees. Members meeting minimum enrollment period requirements who are also eligible for an immediate annuity may continue to participate in the health benefit program when they retire. For an additional fee, incumbent Members can receive health care services from the Office of the Attending Physician in the U.S. Capitol; in addition, Members may purchase care from military hospitals using their FEHBP benefit. Members must also pay the same payroll taxes as all other workers for Medicare Part A coverage.