

Testimony given orally on 4/11/16; not submitted. Did not follow written testimony closely.

TESTIMONY BY COUNCILMEMBER JOANN A. YUKIMURA  
BEFORE THE SALARY COMMISSION  
April 11, 2016

Chair King and Members of the Kauai County Salary Commission:

First, I want to thank you for your work. It has been time-consuming and heart-felt work, and I know you have had at the forefront of your mind, the highest good of our community. As you consider sending a salary resolution to the Council for a second time, I'd like to share with you some thoughts.

My first position was that raises are necessary in all cases, except quite frankly, council salaries. Even though council salaries are part of the resolution, I don't think about them--maybe because it doesn't seem right to do so, as someone who stands to benefit potentially--i.e., if I win the next election. Also, considering whether existing council salaries are enough to attract people to run for office, I think it's quite clear we are not lacking candidates. I am also concerned about the fulltime-parttime differential which the present salary schedule doesn't address. So today I will be talking mainly about executive salaries.

As I stated on the council floor, I believe it is important that we compensate our department heads adequately. Quality leadership at the executive level in terms of expertise and experience is crucial for the proper operation of any large corporation--especially one invested with the public trust. We must be able to attract and retain such leadership.

Where there are huge inversions, that is also an issue that we cannot ignore.

On such a basis, I was ready to vote to sustain the entire list of the proposed executive salaries.

However, as I listened from the standpoint of the public--and also from the standpoint of getting votes to sustain the proposed salary raises, I looked more closely at list. It became apparent to me the the list can be broken down into two groups.

The first group clusters around expert knowledge required, often reflected in degrees of higher learning and level of responsibility. In that category, I would place, for example, the county engineer, the finance director, and the human resource director. Part of the analysis includes how much the private sector is paying for talent in these areas. The other key factor is the inversion crisis which pulls in the police chief and the fire chief.

For the remaining positions these arguments for raising salary do not apply-- there is little difficulty attracting qualified candidates, nor is there significant inversion. High compensation for

jobs that do not require special skills invites the issue, or perception, of political appointments as favors and should be avoided.

For these reasons, I support raises for the one group but not the other which will save the county roughly \$68,000--no small change in a time of tight budgets.