

Senate Bill 70 Sponsor Statement Legislative Branch Per Diem

A.S. 10.100 governs the salary paid to legislators and A.S. 10.130 address moving expenses and per diem allowances during the legislative session. Although no official “definition” is included in statute, “per diem” is usually understood to mean money paid to a person to compensate for his or her daily expenditures on living expenses and meals. And when applied to the legislature, the implied meaning is that per diem means to compensate for expenses while *living away from your own home*.

If a legislator, then, resides in the capital city and maintains a residence there, it would be logical to assume he or she should not incur any extra living expenses while attending legislative session, therefore, by definition, would not warrant a per diem allowance.

Looking into the future, with a capital move on the discussion circuit, this would likewise apply to legislators who would then reside in other potential locations for a Capitol home site.

Additionally, it is my hope that this bill facilitates an extended discussion among legislators and the public about legislator salaries, professional vs. citizen legislature, and disclosure of per diem payments. I would also like to see the label of “long-term per diem,” changed to the word “stipend”, which I believe, more accurately describes the payments made to legislators when we are back in our districts and not in session.