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*Heinz Braun*

It is irreprehensible that at a time where the state cannot afford to give long term state employees an increase of more than 1% in the new state employees pay plan that the Judges and elected officials feel they should receive more, especially after most of them received pay adjustments (some significant) in the months after our new Governor took office. The career state employees pay plan just passed in this last legislative session was necessary because for many years state employees were not given cola increases, merit pay raises (given as lump sum bonuses) but the state employees pay remained stagnant. The pay plan did address some of the issues for hard to keep job categories in an effort to be able to attract people to these jobs but fell short of fixing one of the biggest problems is there is no progression through the pay scale. So without that, the exercise the legislature just went through will be necessary again to keep competent, hardworking, dedicated state employees on the job. So please Independent Citizens Commission keep the all taxpayers and other state and employees in mind when meeting on this decision. Most of us do not get paid to drive back and forth to work, or get paid per diem in addition to our salary. If the Judges get paid in neighboring states and that is the reason for the need for the increase, let the judges move to those states $166,000 salary lives very well in Little Rock. Again the rich get richer on the taxpayers backs.