

It's time to tie Massachusetts legislator pay to the income of the communities they represent

New Bedford's per capita income is nearly half the state average. That would change if we started to tie Massachusetts legislator pay to the income of the communities they represent.

Two years ago, **I reported** that New Bedford Senator Mark Montigny received a whopping 79% increase, going from a \$82,233 income to \$147,548. New Bedford Representative Tony Cabral saw his total pay go up by 37% from \$82,232 to \$112,547. That's an annual increase of \$30,315. New Bedford/Acushnet Representative Robert Koczera (defeated by Christopher Hendricks in 2018) saw his total pay go from \$62,232 to \$87,747 or 31%. New Bedford/Dartmouth Representative Christopher Markey saw his pay go from \$74,732 to \$97,547 or 31%.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, New Bedford's per capita income is at \$23,866 in 2017. That means Senator Montigny's income in 2017 was more than 6 times the income of the New Bedford constituents he represents. Cabral earned nearly five times the income of his constituents.

I personally believe that state legislators should earn exactly the per capita income of their constituents with travel expenses and some other fees being reimbursed (just like the military). If we mandated this, they would feel the tax increase they voted on. They would feel the property tax increases year after year. And for certain, they would work hard at raising the income of their constituents because their

pay raise would depend on it.