

## **Florida Taxpayers Spend Millions Annually on Communications and Legislative Affairs Staff in State Agencies**

Florida taxpayers are funding the salaries of 126 communications department workers in state agencies earning a total of more than \$7.3 million annually, and 71 legislative affairs employees earning more than \$4.3 million a year. As of April 2011, the combined tab for the two departments came to \$11,700,579 a year, or \$975,048 per month, or \$32,056 per day.

When benefits are included at the standard rate of 20 percent, the total annual outlay for these positions rises by \$2,340,115 for a total of \$14,040,694, or \$1,170,057 a month, or \$38,467 each day.<sup>1</sup>

In April 2011, Florida TaxWatch contacted every state agency requesting the names and titles of employees whose primary duties involved communications or legislative affairs. In this study, communications is defined as the division of an agency that performs public information duties such as responding to press inquiries and delivering the agency's message to the public. Legislative affairs is defined as the division that supervises and coordinates the agency's legislative agenda. Florida TaxWatch compiled a list of all employees who fit these criteria, and also had access to the list of state employees on [www.floridahasarighttoknow.com](http://www.floridahasarighttoknow.com). Each list had names that were not on the other. After careful cross-checking and verification of each name, comprehensive lists were compiled in each category. The criteria for inclusion required that the employee's primary job function was in either communications or legislative affairs. Employees who served in these areas as a secondary duty were not included. In the few cases the same person performed both communications and legislative affairs duties that person was placed on the list that was most reflective of their professional title.

The median salary of full time communication employees is \$57,559, a figure slightly higher than the \$57,000 median for legislative affairs employees. However, the mean salary in legislative affairs was substantially higher at \$61,540 versus \$59,173 in communications. At the top end of the salary scale, there are five communications workers earning six figure salaries, the highest coming in at just under \$124,000 a year, while three legislative affairs workers top the \$100,000 mark, the highest earning \$140,000 annually.<sup>2</sup>

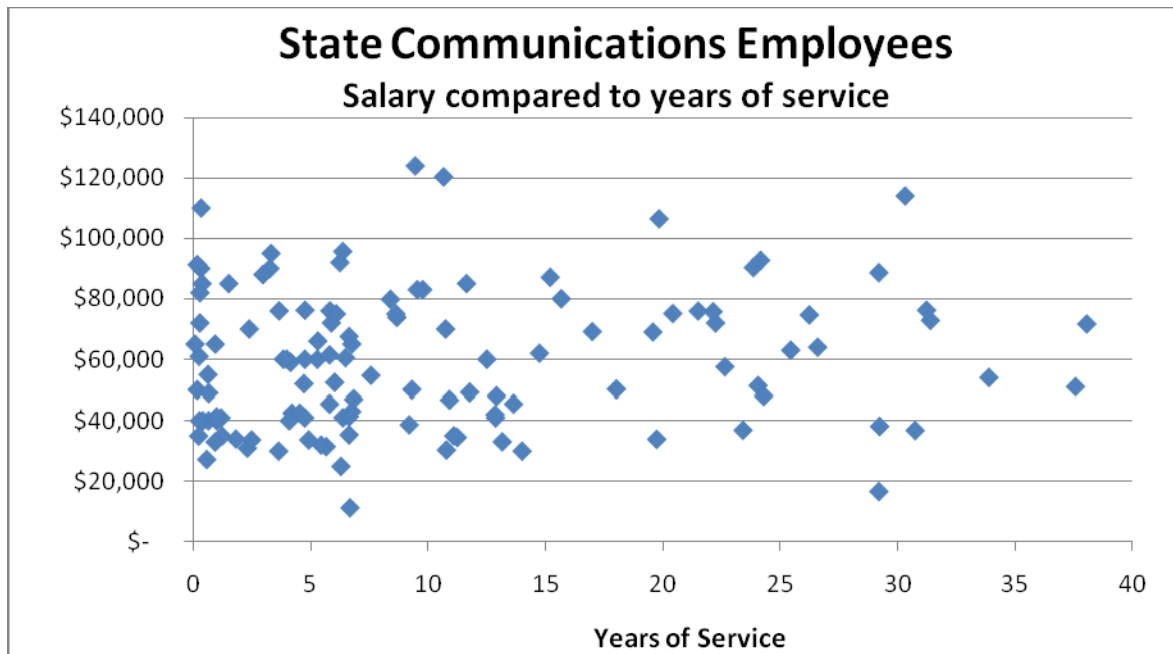
Overall, these workers fare better than the average state employee, who earns an average salary of \$38,540. The typical legislative affairs worker tops that by 63 percent while the average communications

---

<sup>1</sup> According to figures provided by Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA), benefits accounted for 24.6 percent of the \$6.5 billion in state employee compensation in fiscal year 2008-2009, the most recent year for which full statistics are available. This figure does not include university or OPS salaries, neither of which is included in the FTW study.

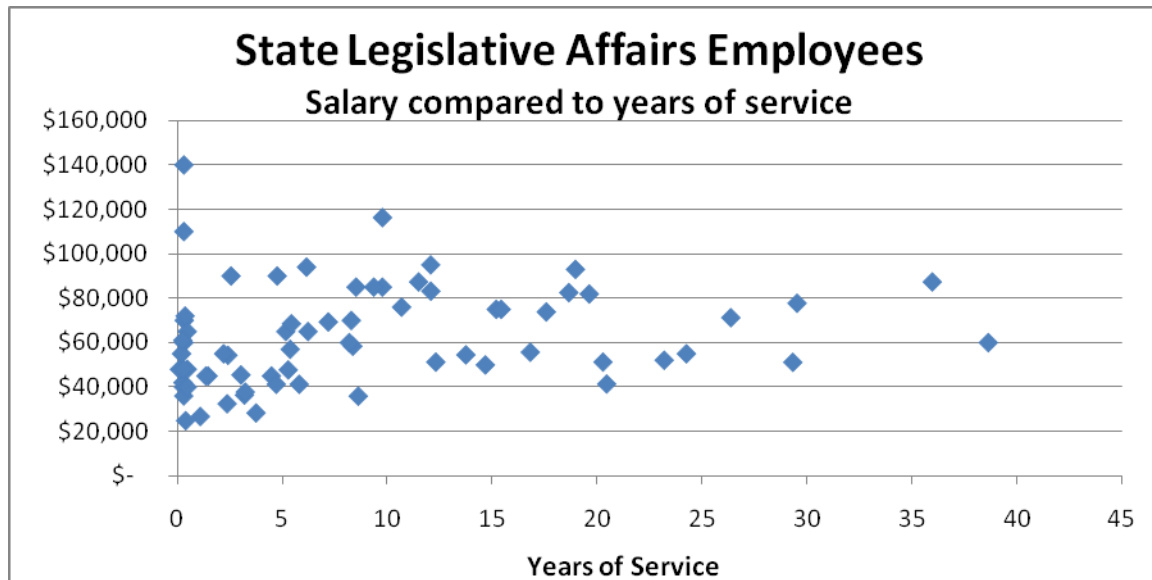
<sup>2</sup> These figures do not include OPS employees.

worker exceeds it by 55 percent.<sup>3</sup> The communications and legislative affairs workers also draw a far higher salary than the approximately \$41,000 that is Florida’s average annual wage for all industries.<sup>4</sup> The median tenure in communications is 6.6 years, compared to 5.6 years in legislative affairs. The longest tenured employee with communications has 38 years of service with the state, while the longest serving legislative affairs employee has 38.6 years. As the charts below show, more than 6 of 10 (61%) communications workers have less than ten years of experience with the state, while 20 percent have between ten and 19 years, and 19 percent have tenures of more than 20 years. Among legislative affairs employees, two-thirds (66.6%) are still in their first decade with the state, while about a fifth (21.7%) are in their second decade. Just 13 percent have more than twenty years of service to the state.



<sup>3</sup> Department of Management Services, Fiscal Year 2009-2010 Annual Workforce Report for state employees in the State Personnel System (SPS), pg. 33.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.



Identifying employees by their titles in either of these disciplines can be exceedingly difficult. While some in communications have appropriate-sounding titles such as Communications Director or Public Information Specialist, other full-time communications workers bear titles such as Staff Assistant, Operations Analyst, and Senior Management Analyst. Going by their titles alone, one would have difficulty identifying these employees as communications staffers. Conversely, dozens of state employees have the title of communications assistant, but are not included in our lists because their jobs had nothing to do with public information functions. In many cases these employees are switchboard operators or dispatchers. The same holds true for legislative affairs. While many have easily identifiable titles such as Legislative Affairs Director and Legislative Coordinator, other more ambiguous titles include Operations Review Specialist, Management Analyst, and Government Analyst. In fact, of the communications workers, only 59 percent have titles that would readily identify them as such, while Legislative Affairs workers fare even lower, coming in at just 51 percent.

This report was a follow-up to the Florida TaxWatch Report and Recommendations of the Government Cost Savings Task Force for FY2011-12 released in December 2010. Item 124 in that report was a recommendation that the state’s elected officials require each agency to review the size and structure of their workforce. For decades, Florida TaxWatch has held the position that the State of Florida’s workforce is too large and bureaucratic and should be streamlined to be more efficient and effective, providing the best return to the taxpayer. While likely all large organizations and governments at all levels have communications and some form of (inter-)governmental/legislative affairs directors, it is important during these difficult fiscal times, when focusing on the core functions of government is paramount, the taxpayers understand the costs of these activities. Only by determining the costs of these activities can their value be assessed. It is the hope of Florida TaxWatch that this report will be helpful to the new administration, giving the Governor a chance to review where there may be unnecessary spending in government while providing an opportunity to further streamline the state’s workforce.



This Florida TaxWatch *Research Report* was written by **Mike Brand**, Research Analyst, under the supervision of **Robert Weissert**, Vice President of Research.

**Marshall Criser, III**, Chairman; **Dominic M. Calabro**, President, Publisher, and Editor.

Florida TaxWatch Research Institute, Inc.

[www.FloridaTaxWatch.org](http://www.FloridaTaxWatch.org)

© Copyright Florida TaxWatch, April 2011

---

## *About Florida TaxWatch*

---

Florida TaxWatch is a statewide, non-profit, non-partisan taxpayer research institute and government watchdog that over its 31-year history has become widely recognized as the watchdog of citizens' hard-earned tax dollars. Its mission is to provide the citizens of Florida and public officials with high quality, independent research and education on government revenues, expenditures, taxation, public policies, and programs, and to increase the productivity and accountability of Florida Government.

Florida TaxWatch's research recommends productivity enhancements and explains the statewide impact of economic and tax and spend policies and practices on citizens and businesses. Florida TaxWatch has worked diligently and effectively to help state government shape responsible fiscal and public policy that adds value and benefit to taxpayers.

This diligence has yielded impressive results: in its first two decades alone, policymakers and government employees implemented three-fourths of Florida TaxWatch's cost-saving recommendations, saving the taxpayers of Florida more than \$6.2 billion -- approximately \$1,067 in added value for every Florida family, according to an independent assessment by Florida State University.

Florida TaxWatch has a historical understanding of state government, public policy issues, and the battles fought in the past necessary to structure effective solutions for today and the future. It is the only statewide organization devoted entirely to Florida taxing and spending issues. Its research and recommendations are reported on regularly by the statewide news media.

Supported by voluntary, tax-deductible memberships and grants, Florida TaxWatch is open to any organization or individual interested in helping to make Florida competitive, healthy and economically prosperous by supporting a credible research effort that promotes constructive taxpayer improvements. Members, through their loyal support, help Florida TaxWatch bring about a more effective, responsive government that is accountable to the citizens it serves.

Florida TaxWatch is supported by all types of taxpayers -- homeowners, small businesses, large corporations, philanthropic foundations, professionals, associations, labor organizations, retirees -- simply stated, the taxpayers of Florida. The officers, Board of Trustees and members of Florida TaxWatch are respected leaders and citizens from across Florida, committed to improving the health and prosperity of Florida.

With your help, Florida TaxWatch will continue its diligence to make certain your tax investments are fair and beneficial to you, the taxpaying customer, who supports Florida's government. Florida TaxWatch is ever present to ensure that taxes are equitable, not excessive, that their public benefits and costs are weighed, and government agencies are more responsive and productive in the use of your hard-earned tax dollars.

*The Florida TaxWatch Board of Trustees is responsible for the general direction and oversight of the research institute and safeguarding the independence of the organization's work. In his capacity as chief executive officer, the president is responsible for formulating and coordinating policies, projects, publications, and selecting professional staff. As an independent research institute and taxpayer watchdog, Florida TaxWatch does not accept money from Florida state and local governments. The research findings and recommendations of Florida TaxWatch do not necessarily reflect the view of its members, staff, distinguished Board of Trustees, or Executive Committee, and are not influenced by the positions of the individuals or organizations who directly or indirectly support the research.*

### *Florida TaxWatch Values:*

◆ *Integrity* ◆ *Productivity* ◆ *Accountability* ◆ *Independence* ◆ *Quality Research*

For a copy of this *Research Report*, please call:

(850) 222-5052

OR

Write to Florida TaxWatch at: P.O. Box 10209

Tallahassee, FL 32302

OR

Access and download the report at:

[www.FloridaTaxWatch.org](http://www.FloridaTaxWatch.org) where this *Research Report* was initially  
released before being printed in hardcopy format



NON-PROFIT ORG.

U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID

TALLAHASSEE, FL  
Permit No. 409