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The original instrument was prepared by Alden A. Clement, Jr. The following digest, which does not constitute a part of the legislative instrument, was prepared by Linda Nugent.

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DIGEST

Duplessis (SB 653)

Present law provides that in addition to salary, per diem, and all other allowances, each member of the legislature shall be paid an expense allowance of \$500 per month for office space, utilities, and for other expenses related to holding or conduct of his office. Proposed law retains present expense allowance for members of the House of Representatives and increases monthly expenses by \$500 for members of the Senate.

Present law provides that each legislator may employ one or more legislative assistants, who shall be employed as unclassified state employees. Present law provides that the total salary of such assistant or assistants shall not exceed the applicable monthly salary as follows:

MONTHLY	
STEP	
SALARY	
Base	
\$ 2,000	
First	
\$ 2,083	
Second	\$ 2,169
Third	
\$ 2,259	
Fourth	
\$ 2,352	
Fifth	
\$ 2,450	
Sixth	
\$ 2,551	
Seventh	\$ 2,657
Eighth	
\$ 2,767	
Ninth	
\$ 2,881	
Maximum	\$ 3,000

Proposed law retains present law but increases the applicable monthly salary of legislative assistants as follows:

MONTHLY  
STEP  
SALARY

Base	
\$ 2,900	
First	
\$ 2,983	
Second	
\$ 3,069	
Third	
\$ 3,159	
Fourth	
\$ 3,252	
Fifth	
\$ 3,350	
Sixth	
\$ 3,451	
Seventh	\$ 3,557
Eighth	
\$ 3,667	
Ninth	
\$ 3,781	
Maximum	\$ 3,900

Proposed law provides relative to annual increases based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for All Urban Consumers.

Proposed law provides that in addition to legislative assistants, each member of the Senate may employ one or more office clerical staff who shall be employed as unclassified state employees. Proposed law provides that the total salary of such assistant or assistants shall not exceed the applicable monthly salary as follows:

MONTHLY  
STEP  
SALARY

Base	
\$ 2,000	
First	
\$ 2,083	
Second	\$ 2,169
Third	
\$ 2,259	
Fourth	

\$ 2,352	
Fifth	
\$ 2,450	
Sixth	
\$ 2,551	
Seventh	\$ 2,657
Eighth	
\$ 2,767	
Ninth	
\$ 2,881	
Maximum	\$ 3,000

Proposed law provides that annually, on July one, the amount for each step provided for in proposed law shall be adjusted based on any increase in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers All Items as determined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the United States Department of Labor based on the preceding calendar year.

Present law provides that on and after 7/1/98 any legislator who has the maximum salary step available to him for his legislative assistants shall have available a step increase of four percent per year for the salary available for his legislative assistants. Proposed law retains present law but deletes the deadline of 7/1/98 and makes present law applicable to the office clerical staff provided for by proposed law.

Present law provides that each legislator shall determine the qualification requirements of his legislative assistants, but no person who is a member of the family of the legislator may serve as his legislative assistant. Proposed law retains present law and makes it applicable to Senator's office clerical staff in addition to legislative assistants.

Present law provides that each legislative assistant shall perform such duties as the legislator may assign and shall be paid a salary fixed by the legislator, provided that the salary for any one legislative assistant shall not exceed \$2,000 per month plus the equivalent of one step for each year of his employment as a legislative assistant or the equivalent of one step for each year of the employing legislator's service as a legislator, at the option of the employing legislator. Proposed law retains present law but makes it applicable also to Senators' office clerical staff, and provides that the salary for any one legislative assistant shall not exceed the monthly salary for the base step plus the equivalent of one step for each year of his employment as a legislative assistant or the equivalent of one step for each year of the employing legislator's service as a legislator, at the option of the employing legislator.

Present law provides that when more than one assistant is employed by a legislator, the total salary shall not exceed \$2,000 plus the equivalent of one step for each year of employment as a legislative assistant or the equivalent of one step for each year of the employing legislator's service as a legislator, at the option of the employing legislator, by all of these assistants. Proposed law retains present law but makes it applicable also to Senators' office clerical staff, and provides that the total monthly salary for all assistants and clerical staff shall not exceed the

monthly salary base step plus the equivalent of one step for each year of employment as a legislative assistant or clerical staff, or the equivalent of one step for each year of the employing legislator's service as a legislator, at the option of the employing legislator, by all of these assistants and clerical staff.

Present law provides that when part-time help or contractual services are used, the total payments shall not exceed an amount equal to the base salary of a legislative assistant. Proposed law retains present law but makes it applicable also to office clerical staff.

Present law provides that the salary of each legislative assistant shall be paid from the funds of the respective houses, withdrawn from the state treasury and deposited in the manner provided in R.S. 24:31.1, and shall be paid to each individual legislative assistant whose employment and salary have been certified by a member to his respective presiding officer. Payment shall be by check signed by the speaker of the House of Representatives as to the salary of legislative assistants to House members, and by another member of the Senate designated by the president of the Senate and countersigned by the president of the Senate as to the salary of legislative assistants to Senate members. Proposed law retains present law and makes it applicable also to Senators' office clerical staff.

Present law provides that present law shall not prohibit the use of contractual secretarial services in lieu of one or more legislative assistants, nor does present law preclude two or more legislators from cooperatively employing an assistant or assistants, who may be paid in excess of the salary limits prescribed above, but not in excess of the salary limits available to the cooperating legislators. Proposed law retains present law and makes it applicable also to Senators' office clerical staff.

Proposed law provides that each legislator who employs one or more legislative assistants shall notify the presiding officer of his house in writing as to the name of each such assistant and the salary to be paid. Present law provides that any change of person or salary shall be reported to the presiding officer of his house within ten days after such change. The respective presiding officer shall hold such reports during the term of office of the legislator involved. Proposed law retains present law and makes it applicable also to Senators' office clerical staff.

Present law provides that each legislative assistant who is employed full time and who either has at least one year of experience or receives at least eighty percent of the total compensation available to the employing legislator for his assistants, including all step increases authorized by law, may participate in the state's group life, health, and hospitalization insurance program and the state employees' retirement system. Present law provides that any legislative assistant who does not meet the criteria set forth herein shall not be eligible to participate in these or any other benefits accruing under law to state employees. Proposed law retains present law and makes it applicable also to Senators' office clerical staff.

Present law provides that all legislative assistants shall be eligible for workers' compensation coverage as state employees immediately upon employment. Proposed law retains present law and makes it applicable also to Senators' office clerical staff.

Effective July 1, 2008.

(Amends R.S. 24:31.4(A) and (C) and 31.5)

Summary of Amendments Adopted by Senate

Committee Amendments Proposed by Senate Committee on Finance to the original bill.

1. Eliminates the expense allowance increase for members of the House of Representatives - retains existing \$500 per month allowance.
2. Limits expense allowance increase for Senate members to \$500 per month.
3. Clarifies eligibility for certain group life, health, and hospitalization coverage for legislative assistants and office clerical staff.

Floor Amendments to the engrossed bill.

1. Changes the effective date of the Act from January 1, 2009, to July 1, 2008.
2. Technical amendments.