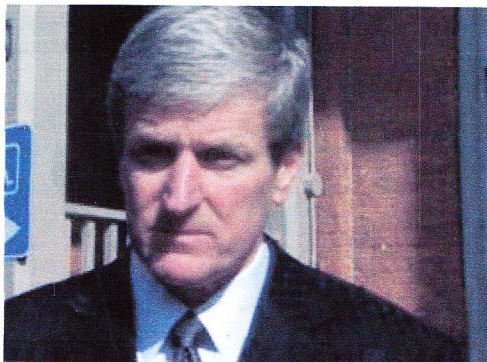


## Sheriff O'Flynn Defends Raise, Responds to Critics



Sheriff Patrick O'Flynn

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Rochester, N.Y. - [Monroe County](#) Sheriff Patrick O'Flynn fired back at critics of his salary increase, calling it "appropriate" and saying that Sheriffs across New York State are "well underpaid."

Democrats in the [county legislature](#) are calling on the county to rescind O'Flynn's raise, which was presented for discussion very late in the budget process.

"At the very least, the public deserves input," said Democratic county legislator Vinnie Esposito. "He's elected by the people, and they ought to have more time to contribute to the discussion."

O'Flynn currently makes a salary of about \$124,000. Under the new terms, the Monroe County Sheriff will now be paid the same salary as the Monroe County District Attorney. The DA's salary is tied to the salary of State Supreme Court Justices, which currently stands at \$136,700. O'Flynn is in line for roughly a 10 percent raise.

But in reality, O'Flynn could see a 29 percent raise by April. That's because New York lawmakers appointed a Special Commission on Judicial Compensation, which was charged with determining a fair salary structure for judges. In August the commission announced [their decision](#), which the state is bound to uphold unless the legislature specifically amends it. 13WHAM News contacted members of the state legislature from both parties, along with district attorneys and judges in western New York. All said they expected the commission's decision to stand.

That would mean that come April, O'Flynn (along with Monroe County District Attorney-elect Sandra Doorley) will make \$160,000 annually. The pay schedule calls for raises to \$167,000 in 2013 and \$174,000 in 2014. If O'Flynn is re-elected Sheriff, he could see his pay rise by \$50,000 annually in just over two years.

"We've been hearing about higher judicial salaries for years, and it's never happened," O'Flynn told 13WHAM News, shrugging off the possibility that his pay will rise far more than the scheduled 10 percent. He continued, "In ten years, I've given this community the savings of not taking a salary increase. I have nothing to apologize for. The office of Sheriff statewide is well underpaid. It's frustrating."

Thursday night, Republican majority leader Anthony Daniele told 13WHAM News that he also doubted the scheduled raises would take effect. But he acknowledged that under the current schedule, "Yes, Sheriff O'Flynn would get a stupid increase in pay I acknowledge that's a bad idea. I have no reason to believe the state is going to give the judges a raise."

O'Flynn pointed out that his own Undersheriff makes \$141,000, roughly \$17,000 more than he does. "How can you groom a successor when that happens?" O'Flynn asked. "They're not going to want to take a paycut. It's a problem all over, not just here."

Democrats weren't moved by O'Flynn's points, saying that even if the Sheriff deserved a raise, the current economic crunch makes this a bad time for him to ask. "I think it's audacious at best for anyone to ask for a pay increase in tough economic times, when budgets are being cut," Esposito said. "The Sheriff knows that people are hurting. I just don't think that someone making \$123,000 can say their salary is unfair. We want him compensated fairly, and we think he is."

Esposito went further, calling this a potential case of "pension padding," a practice in which a public office holder sees a late-career spike in salary in order to boost their pension. "It's hard to think it's not pension padding," he said. "Pension padding is a problem. When you inflate your own pay by this much, you know it's going to have a huge impact on your pension. It's hard to think that's not a factor, and yes, public officials -- especially the people who make the rules -- should be questioned on this stuff."

O'Flynn flatly rejected the charge.

"If this were all about money, I'd be double-dipping," the Sheriff countered. "I choose not to. My current salary is not even a fair salary when you compare it to comparable salaries elsewhere. Pension padding? That's offensive. I don't do this for the money. I do it because I love the [job](#)."

The Sheriff also responded to Democrats' claims that his request for a raise came very late in the budget process, with almost no time for public discussion. "I talked about this with the administration a month ago," he said. "It's not in my hands, whether

Democrats knew that or not."

Esposito replied, "We were blind-sided, and the taxpayers were blind-sided."

Democrats plan to continue their push to have the raise rescinded, but [County Executive](#) Maggie Brooks signed off on the budget and was not available to comment on Friday. O'Flynn called his raise an extremely small part of the [county budget](#). "This has become all about politics," he said.

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