



## The mayor's political weapons

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The Mayor is taking a \$6,000 cut, after giving himself a \$65,000 raise.

Remember that last year, the Mayor was drawing a salary of \$35,000. After he was re-elected Mayor on December 8th, he awarded himself a raise, without so much as squeaking to the press, whilst parks and libraries were being shut down. Now he announces a 6 percent cut to the world. Here is my calculation assuming the annual salary points at the beginning of the fiscal years:

$\$35,000$  (2008 salary) +  $\$65,000$  (2008 raise) -  $\$6,000$  (2009 cut) =  $\$94,000$  (2009 salary)

Difference between July 2009 and July 2008 salary =  $+\$59,000$

Percentage raise = 169 percent (not a 6 percent cut)

When politicians start using numbers as political weapons, they leave out all the caveats. Let me list some of them:

- (1) The cut refers to position salary, not total compensation. A \$6,000 cut constitutes about 3 percent in reduced income for the Mayor since November, and still leaves him with almost \$187,000 annual income. This is because the Mayor currently draws \$192,864 from the city's coffers (that includes \$100,464 in salary and \$92,400 in pension).
- (2) The cut refers to personnel expenses in departmental budgets. This leaves out a huge hole in terms of non-personnel expenses, including contracts, which continue to get renewed with inflation-indexed increases.
- (3) The cut does not apply to new positions created since the last budget. The Mayor has created new positions that have a new salary structure that works around the cuts. In comparison, councilmembers aides are stuck with the old structure.

This reminds me of the magician that pulls a bunny out of his hat, *cuts his ears off*, and gets applause from the kids that paid to watch the show.