



DenverDA

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Setting The Record Straight

December 23, 2008 – There is current media coverage related to the Denver District Attorney's Office and its request for an increase in the District Attorney's salary that needs clarification. The District Attorney is NOT asking for a \$32,000 raise from Denver City Council.

What was reported:

The Denver Post and the Rocky Mountain News reported in their papers on December 23, 2008 that "Council backs \$32,000 raise for Morrissey" and "\$32,000 raise for Denver DA clears first hurdle," implying that Denver is being asked for this increase. This is not the case.

What wasn't reported:

Missing from the reports is that the request before Denver City Council is to approve only a small portion of a state-mandated increase – \$5,880 in 2009 – because the rest is paid by the state. This would be a 6.45% increase and would be the first increase in salary for the DA in four years. The proposal before City Council would also include a \$2,000 increase in each of the three subsequent years. (Roughly a 2% increase.) Again, the State of Colorado pays the remainder of the increase which is a fixed amount already set by lawmakers.

Additional background information:

The state legislature sets the mandatory minimum salary for all of the state's district attorneys, which increases from \$67,000 set in 1997 to \$100,000 in 2009. The state pays 80% of that salary.

Denver's City Charter dictates that changes can only be made to the DA compensation package prior to the beginning of each term. There has been no change in the DA's salary or compensation since it was set by City Council in 2004. The DA did not receive the 2007 market adjustment increase (14.28%) given to legal occupation employees, he did not receive any cost of living increases or any merit increases (which averaged 5.1% this year according to CSA). In fact, he is making less now as District Attorney than if he had remained a Chief Deputy District Attorney.

The Denver District Attorney is not the highest paid DA in Colorado; that honor currently goes to the DA in the 8th Judicial District. (The Denver DA is currently the 5th highest paid District Attorney.)

The Denver District Attorney has readily acknowledged the unfortunate timing of this request.

However, it is the only time allowed between now and 2012 to make such a request. If the office did not ask for a compensation adjustment to his salary this year, the result would be that he would make the same salary in 2012 that was in place when he was elected to his first term in 2004.