

Intergovernmental Issues

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1990 constitutional convention costs estimated by commission staff

by Mary Edwards

Next November, one of the many decisions awaiting Illinois voters at the polls will be the twenty-year periodic question on whether to convene a constitutional convention. If the call is approved by voters, what will a constitutional convention cost the state and its taxpayers? Commission staff have estimated the costs based on the actual expenditures from the previous constitutional convention of 1970, as cited in the *Records of Proceedings of the Sixth Illinois Constitutional Convention*. It is assumed that a 1990 convention would follow a procedure similar to that of the last convention, including such specifics as the number of employees and the duration of the convention. The only major difference would be the number of elected delegates. In 1969, 116 delegates were selected from the state's 58 Senate districts. Today, there are 59 Senate districts; thus it is assumed that 118 delegates would be selected for the convention.

The most comprehensive price index available and the most widely used as a measure of inflation is the GNP deflator. More specifically, the GNP price deflator for government purchases of goods and services was used to estimate the inflation rate between 1970 and 1988. The precise

numbers for 1970 through 1984 were taken from the *Statistical Abstract of the U.S., 1986*. Estimates were then made for 1984 through 1988. The average annual inflation rate for the 1970-84 period was 7%. This figure was used to derive the index numbers for 1984 through 1988. The percentage of change from 1970 to 1988 was then calculated to be approximately 270%, and the previous expenditures from the 1970 Constitutional Convention were inflated to reflect this increase in the general price level. For example, three Constitution Study Commissions were established in 1965, 1967 and 1969 to conduct research and to assist with convention functions. Total expenditures were \$159,246; therefore, the estimated cost of any study commissions that would be established in the near future is \$580,000. Similarly, \$10,000 was expended in 1970 for court reporting services, so it is estimated that \$37,000 would be spent in 1990.

Again, the wage figures used were the actual wages paid to employees of the previous convention. Each wage rate was inflated by approximately 230%; the wage inflation rate calculated from 1970 through 1988. This figure was derived from the average monthly earnings of full-time employees in state and local government from 1970-1984 (*Statistical Abstract of the*
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PROJECTED CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION EXPENSES, 1988-90

(Based on expenditures from the 1969-70 constitutional convention and adjusted for inflation)

PRE-CONVENTION EXPENSES

Constitution Study Commissions (to compile information, make recommendations, undertake studies and research, collect background information, arrange for the hiring of staff)	\$580,000
Primary Election of Delegates Expenses	4,500,000
General Election of Delegates Expenses	<u>4,500,000</u>
TOTAL PRE-CONVENTION EXPENSES	\$9,580,000

INTERNAL BUDGET OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

Salaries and Expenses of Members of Convention

Pres. salary (\$4,900/9 mo.)	44,100
V.P. salaries (3 @ 3,900/9 mo.)	105,300
Per diem expenses (118 @ \$150/100 days)	1,770,000
Monthly salary delegates (114 @ \$2,000/8 mo.)	1,824,000
Meals, lodging, incidentals (118 @ \$125/115 days)	<u>1,696,250</u>
Total Members' Expenses	\$5,439,650

Staff Salaries

96 positions (include staff counsel, admin. assistants, secretarial and clerical staff, researchers, pages, etc.)	
Total Staff Salaries	\$1,339,230

All Other Expenses

Bldg. leases, office supplies, office equipment purchases and equipment transfers	290,000
Members' subscriptions, books and postage	60,200
Court reporting services	37,000
Telecommunications, microphones and recording equipment	155,500
Visiting committee consultants, expenses and honoraria	37,000
Staff travel and mileage: (25 cents per mile @ 40,000 mi./30 weeks)	318,500
Printing of proposals, committee reports, journals; postage	740,000
Printing and binding of proceedings	<u>740,000</u>
Total Other Expenses	\$2,378,200
TOTAL INTERNAL BUDGET	\$9,157,080

POST-CONVENTION EXPENSES

Legal and drafting services	184,000
Research assistance, studies and reports to delegates	164,000
Administrative expenses of the Auditor General: (cost of keeping books, making payments, disbursements)	44,000
Publication and dissemination of Constitution by Secretary of State	3,230,000
Printing and distribution by printer to county clerks	1,260,000
Postage and handling charges from county clerk to electorate	1,299,000
Inclusion in newspapers	659,000
Tape recording for the blind	12,600
Reimbursement to county officials at the special election on adoption/rejection of Constitution	<u>5,936,925</u>
TOTAL POST-CONVENTION EXPENSES	\$12,789,525

TOTAL CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION EXPENSES **\$31,526,605**

Con-Con. . . . from page 1 U.S., 1986). Projections were then made for 1988 by calculating the average yearly increase in the wage rate (7%) and applying it to these earnings to obtain levels for 1985-1988. The percentage of change from 1970 to 1988 was applied to every wage rate from the previous convention and inflated to reflect the increase. Thus, the president, who received \$1,500/month in 1968 would receive \$4,900/month in 1988, and the pages who received \$350/month in 1968 would receive \$1,100/month in 1988.

The cost of elections was determined by a slightly different method. There are approximately 11,700 precincts in Illinois. The majority of the expenses incurred at an election are the salary requirements of the five election judges in each precinct. Today the average salary is \$45/day for each election judge. It is estimated that by 1988, they will receive \$50/day. This particular expense represents approximately 65% of the total cost of an election. The expenses incurred by the election judges are estimated to be \$2,925,000 in 1988. As this represents approximately 65% of the total cost, the cost is calculated to be \$4,500,000. This is an increase of 80% over the cost of the primary and general elections in 1969. The cost of the special election held on the adoption/rejection of the proposed constitution was also inflated by 80% to reflect the general increase.

Bear in mind that these figures are subject to fluctuation based on the timing or type of election and on statutory requirements relating to the convention election process. ■