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**SEND A LETTER TO
THE EDITOR**

The Platte Institute strongly believes in the importance of citizens participating in the public dialogue on issues important to

PLATTE CHAT

Another CIR Black Eye: Nebraska Pays its Firefighters too Much

In Nebraska, we pay our fighters more than \$10,000 a year more than what their colleagues in Iowa make. In fact, Nebraska pays its firefighters more than \$6,200 a year above the regional average^[i] – an excessive amount by most standards.

By comparison, Nebraska pays its elementary and secondary education employees \$1,072 more than the regional average and its police just \$642 above the regional average.

Employees in Nebraska's public welfare sector are paid the least compared to the regional average. Data shows that public welfare workers make \$3,827 less than the regional average on an annual basis. Hospital (-\$3,650), Highway (-\$3,531), Corrections (-\$2,594) and Higher Education Instructional Employees (-\$2,485) are earn below-average annual

Nebraska. Writing a letter to the editor is an outstanding way to partake in the discussion and have your voice heard by thousands of people. To make the process easier, the Platte Institute has assembled a list of links which allow you to submit a letter to the editor to nearly all Nebraska newspapers. Simply [CLICK HERE](#) for a listing of the newspapers and follow the appropriate link to submit your letter.

compensation according to the findings.[\[ii\]](#)

The glaring question centers on why we pay our firefighters so much better than other public employees. Should Nebraska firefighters (\$61,575) be paid closer to what their colleagues in New York (\$65,756) earn instead of Iowa (\$51,230) or even Kansas (\$52,484)?

While it would be hard to question the value of the firefighter profession, it is quite easy to question apparent overpayment of their services, especially compared to the other public professions.

During a time when government agencies throughout Nebraska are searching for ways to reduce expenditures, this overpayment deserves special notation. Generous pay for firefighters is noteworthy along with failure of the Commission of Industrial Relations (CIR) to create parity for public employee jobs in our state.

The CIR is supposed to negotiate "fair" rates of compensation for employees by comparing them with colleagues in similar job classifications in states and communities which closely resemble each other. This data suggests the CIR does a poor job in making rates of pay comparable.

A recent report by the Platte Institute called for the abolishment of the CIR because of its many

faults and negative impact on Nebraska's economy. This data indicates there is even more depth to the decrepitude of the CIR than we originally thought.

Firefighters

Colorado	\$65,601
Nebraska	\$61,575 (+\$6,217)
<u>Regional Avg.</u>	<u>\$55,358</u>
Missouri	\$53,884
Wyoming	\$53,411
Kansas	\$52,484
Iowa	\$51,230
South Dakota	\$49,327

Police

Colorado	\$63,896
Nebraska	\$52,704 (+\$642)
Iowa	\$52,062
<u>Regional Avg.</u>	<u>\$51,622</u>
Wyoming	\$50,324
Kansas	\$49,469
Missouri	\$47,308
South Dakota	\$45,592

Total Elementary and Secondary Education

Colorado	\$40,214
Wyoming	\$40,059
Nebraska	\$37,518 (+\$1,072)
<u>Regional Avg.</u>	<u>\$36,446</u>
Iowa	\$35,370
Missouri	\$35,006
Kansas	\$34,487
South Dakota	\$32,473

Higher Education Instructional Employees

Kansas	\$70,609
Colorado	\$69,968
Iowa	\$65,839
<u>Regional Avg.</u>	<u>\$63,461</u>
South Dakota	\$62,257
Nebraska	\$60,976 (-\$2,485)
Missouri	\$58,689

Wyoming	\$55,890
<u>Hospitals</u>	
Iowa	\$49,042
Colorado	\$47,729
Wyoming	\$42,893
<u>Regional Avg.</u>	<u>\$41,026</u>
Missouri	\$38,032
Nebraska	\$37,376 (-\$3,650)
Kansas	\$37,341
South Dakota	\$34,772
<u>Highways</u>	
Colorado	\$49,000
Iowa	\$46,013
Wyoming	\$41,216
<u>Regional Avg.</u>	<u>\$40,355</u>
Missouri	\$38,266
Nebraska	\$36,824 (-\$3,531)
South Dakota	\$35,832
Kansas	\$35,337
<u>Corrections</u>	
Colorado	\$49,127
Iowa	\$47,175
<u>Regional Avg.</u>	<u>\$38,375</u>
Wyoming	\$37,084
Kansas	\$36,248
Nebraska	\$35,781 (-\$2,594)
South Dakota	\$33,192
Missouri	\$30,023
<u>Public Welfare</u>	
Colorado	\$44,790
Iowa	\$43,736
Wyoming	\$40,651
<u>Regional Avg.</u>	<u>\$36,594</u>
Kansas	\$33,767
Nebraska	\$32,767 (-\$3,827)
South Dakota	\$32,714
Missouri	\$27,735

[i] Regional average consists of the following states:
Nebraska, Iowa, South Dakota, Colorado, Wyoming, Kansas
and Missouri.

[ii] All data is from 2007 and was compiled by the Tax
Foundation.

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