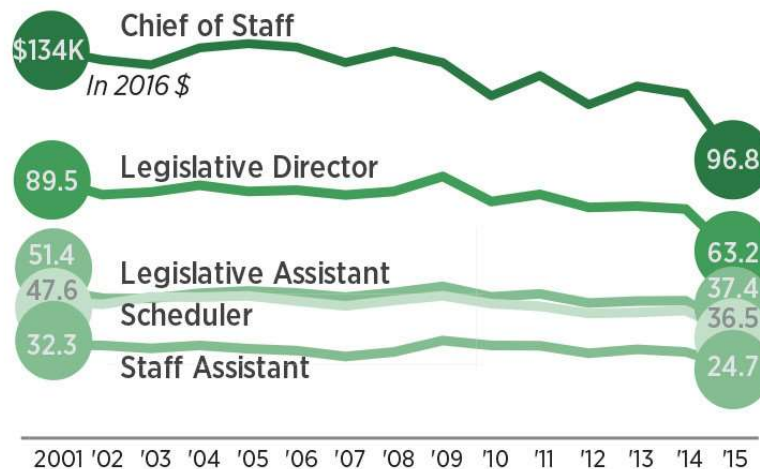


## Bad News for Cash-Strapped Congressional Staffers

Pay for congressional staffers has been dropping for the past 15 years, adjusted for inflation, according to recently compiled statistics.

### Sinking Salaries

The average pay for each key House staff position has decreased over the past decade, down as much as 29 percent from 2001 to 2015.



The figures come from Joshua McCrain, a political science doctoral student at Emory University in Georgia. "You think it should be trending up," McCrain says. "There's more and more demands on these people. Their jobs are getting more complicated. Congress has more things to do. It's technically more complex. And D.C. is such an expensive place to live, that a \$30-40,000 salary is really not worth anything anymore."

Look at chief of staff. In 2001, the average salary was \$134,889, adjusted for inflation. In 2015, it stands at \$96,759. Even worse is the bottom of the rung — the staff assistant's pay was a measly \$33,899 in 2009, adjusted for inflation, but in retrospect that looks like a king's ransom. The average pay for that job in 2015 was just \$24,709. In 2001, legislative directors earned \$89,473, but that figure dropped to \$63,231 in 2015.

McCrain says there are a few factors leading to the decline. First, each House member gets a fixed amount of money for all their expenses. At the same time, the average size of the D.C. office has been dropping as greater demands are placed on district offices. Finally, more junior staffers, along with their more modest pay, seem to be making up a greater share of the D.C. staff.

"It just seems like a terrible job," he says, "and increasingly, the only reason the people are doing it is to develop a résumé for these really lucrative lobbying jobs."

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