



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 16, 2010

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In Case You Missed It

What Does Diane Denish's Scheduler Do For \$71,050 A Year?

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By Jim Scarantino

New Mexico Watchdog Blog

August 16, 2010

Read this online at: <http://newmexico.watchdog.org/3270/what-does-diane-denishs-scheduler-do-for-71050-a-year/>

She doesn't have a calendar for planning her time. But Lt. Governor Diane Denish does have a "scheduler" whom the taxpayers pay \$71,050 a year. So what do taxpayers get for that big paycheck, which is twice the salary of a starting teacher, and more than the regular pay of policemen, firefighters and prosecutors?

[We asked that question](#) on June 21, 2010, when [Heath Haussamen reported](#) that in response to a public records request for Diane Denish's calendar of activities he was informed she doesn't have a calendar. He had sought her calendar or schedule for a thirty-day period. He was not seeking Denish's personal calendar, something she may write down herself to schedule her campaign appointments. Nor was he seeking the calendar of her political campaign committee. He was seeking any calendar or schedule kept for her by government employees for her official duties as Lt. Governor.

He was told by Denish's chief-of-staff that the Office of Lt. Governor maintains no calendar or schedule of her time as Lt. Governor. That came as a surprise to us since our colleague at Capitol Report, Rob Nikolweski, [had reported](#) how the \$500,000 annual cost of Denish's office included a \$71,050 annual salary for a "scheduler." Schedulers schedule, one would think. They make appointments and calendar their boss's time and meetings, right? So if this "scheduler" wasn't scheduling Denish's appointments and use

of her time, what was she doing for that nice paycheck?

Just a few days shy of two months ago, we filed with the custodian of records for the Lt. Governor's Office a request to inspect "all the schedulers or calendars prepared by the scheduler employed by the Office of Lt. Governor for the period from January 2009 to the present." And if the scheduler for \$71,050 annually was doing something else, we thought taxpayers should know what she does. After All, Diane Denish has run the most expensive Lt. Governor's Office in its history. None of her predecessors have had such a large staff, a six-figure security budget, or racked up unprecedented bills for use of the state's aircraft. Taxpayers have a right to know what they are getting in exchange for paying that tab. So we also asked to see a year's work product of the "scheduler."

If there are no calendars or schedules for Denish's time, as Haussamen was told, the response to our request would be a simple thing. But instead the Lt. Governor's office has now twice informed us it needs more time to respond to our request. It simply is not plausible, as Haussamen was informed, that the Lt. Governor maintains no official calendar or schedule. Her time management would be chaotic. If, in fact, that is the case, then she should explain why she feels justified in having taxpayers pay such a high salary for a job position identified as "scheduler."

At the pay scale of \$71,050, Denish's scheduler makes less than many political appointees, but a more than many others. That rate of compensation for keeping (or not keeping) the Lt. Governor's schedule is higher than the General Counsel and Senior Financial Auditor for the Department of Finance and Administration; higher than senior attorneys in the Office of the Attorney General; higher than division directors in the Economic Development Department and other agencies; and higher than administrative positions in education, border security, law enforcement, health, state investments, and other positions with more responsibility and demands than that of keeping (or not keeping) Diane Denish's schedule. To compare where Denish's scheduler falls in the pay scale for political appointees, go to the Albuquerque Journal's [Watchdog database](#).

Our raising the question of what taxpayers get in exchange for paying Denish's "scheduler" \$71,050 arose in the [tit-for-tat](#) with the Susana Martinez gubernatorial campaign over how Martinez ran her District Attorney's Office. Martinez' spokesperson, according to [Steve Terrell](#) of The Santa Fe New Mexican, pointed out that Denish's "scheduler" gets paid more than anybody in Martinez' office of prosecutors and investigators. Escaping notice was the amount Denish pays her chief of staff. There Denish joins Bill Richardson in breaking the \$100,000 barrier for political appointee compensation. Denish's current chief of staff, Joshua Rosen, pulls in just a few dollars short of \$109,000. That is 20% higher than the top pay for a principal in the Albuquerque Public School system. And that's compared to a high school principal. Denish is having taxpayers pay her chief of staff a full \$40,000 more than the annual salary for principals at elementary schools. You can see the APS pay schedule [here](#).

The pay for an elementary school principal is \$69,000, less than Denish gives her “scheduler.”

Schools principals have terribly hard jobs. They supervise huge budgets, deal with property maintenance, unions, hundreds of employees, and safety concerns for hundreds, if not thousands of children. What does Denish’s chief of staff do to deserve a significantly higher rate of pay than school principals? He supervises a staff of five people, including Denish’s “scheduler”:

Salary	Last Name	First Name	Agency	Position	
\$108,528.20	ROSEN	JOSHUA	OFC OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR	CHIEF OF STAFF	
\$84,999.20	DENISH	DIANE	OFC OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR	LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR	
\$71,050.00	JOHNSON	SAMANTHA	OFC OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR	SCHEDULER	
\$67,187.70	ACOSTA	CARLOS	OFC OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR	SPECIAL PROJECTS COORD. II	
\$62,589.07	VASQUEZ	ERIC	OFC OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR	SENIOR POLICY ANALYST	
\$44,155.82	MOUNT	JUSTIN	OFC OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR	OMBUDSMAN 1	
\$32,353.49	CASADOS	CARMELLA	OFC OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR	STAFF ASSISTANT	
\$10.00	LANDEE-THOMPSON	BETTY	70000.000	OFC OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR	DIRECTOR OF MEDIA COORDINATION
\$2.08	DENISH	HERB	OFC OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR	SECOND GENTLEMAN	

This data from the Journal’s Watchdog database was compiled in 2009. But Denish’s office has not expanded since then. Samantha Johnson, the “scheduler,” has departed. Rosen is still the high paid chief of staff. And, according to other records on the Journal’s database, it appears he got a raise in his base pay to take him over \$109,000 a year since the Journal collated the data captured in the screen shot above.

In tenth months of reporting on how Lt. Governor Diane Denish spends taxpayer money, she and her office have never once responded to questions submitted by telephone or e-mail, even though we told them we would publish their response in full. So we’ll wait until they finally produce public records to complete this story as the truth most likely laws in those documents.

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