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## Comment / Shortening the gravy train

By [Zvi Zrahiya](#)

Hard to believe, but the Knesset House committee actually decided to ax the scandalous severance compensation for brand-new Knesset members serving less than six months, after an article in Haaretz.

Each had been entitled to compensation in the range of NIS 17,280 to NIS 23,040. But cosmetics queen Pnina Rosenblum, businessman-politician Weizman Shiri, attorney David Mena, strategist Ronen Zur and Knesset member Tova Ilan don't need compensation: None had been required to give up their private occupations to serve the people.

The rules state that in the first six months in parliament, a Knesset member can receive pay as a parliamentarian, NIS 32,000 a month plus perks, while also continue to receive a salary on the outside. Moreover, the above crew will only be in parliament for three to four months, during most of which, the House is in recess ahead of elections.

### Well done, Rivlin, but keep going

Kudos to Knesset Speaker Reuven Rivlin, who spearheaded the move to annul their compensation rights, with the help of legislator Daniel Benlulu. But they have more work to do.

The real test of the Knesset members will be to abolish the NIS 320,000 "adjustment compensation" for MKs who have only served one term but lost their seats. It is wrong for a legislator to receive the equivalent of ten monthly salaries for working just three or four years. They should get one month's salary, as public servants do.

The MKs face another test today, when the Knesset Finance Committee discusses scaling back benefits for ex-presidents and prime ministers. There is no reason for the taxpayer to finance their perks, including official residences, for life. Presidents should be financed for seven years and former prime ministers for five, during which time they would be entitled to limited benefits as proposed by the committee headed by former finance minister Avraham Shochat, and that's it.

### The lap of state luxury

As for that state apartment for former presidents, the taxpayer should not have to pick up the bill for more than three years. Regarding ex-prime ministers, they should get a fixed budget for five years to use as they please, not get NIS 1.5 million to NIS 2 million a year for the rest of their lives, which is the situation today.

Some of the Knesset Finance Committee members are losing hair over the terms for two particular ex-prime ministers, Ehud Barak and Benjamin Netanyahu. Both are relatively young men who need not worry about their future. The state should not have to support them for life. Barak, 64, does business around the world and has made a fortune since leaving government in 2001. Netanyahu, 56, also made a tidy amount from lecturing abroad after stepping down as prime minister, and now he's also a Knesset member.

The Knesset Finance Committee should not hesitate: it should approve the recommendations to cut the terms of ex-prime ministers and presidents, as Shochat recommends. The changes will ripple onto other people living on the state budget for no good reason.

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