

Testimony to the Little Hoover Commission

Human Resources Progress Update

November 21, 2013

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This testimony is submitted to you on behalf of AdHoc, which is a monthly forum of departmental Personnel/Human Resources (HR) Officers in California State service. Important issues are discussed at the forum along with updates from the Department of Human Resources (CalHR), State Personnel Board (SPB), State Controller's Office, Department of Finance, and the California Public Employees Retirement System. AdHoc also coordinates with other statewide HR groups: Small Personnel (Offices) Information Network, Labor Relations Forum, Transactions Supervisors Forum, Classification & Pay Supervisors Forum, and the Exam Supervisors Forum, to improve administration of the State's civil service system.

The general consensus of the AdHoc member departments providing input to this testimony regarding progress toward the Governor's Reorganization Plan's stated goals of streamlining the personnel system and improving customer service are as follow:

- **Have you noticed changes in your experiences in working with the state's personnel agencies, prior to the 2011 reorganization and since its implementation?**

We are pleased with efforts by CalHR to collaborate with departments on consolidating the Career Executive Assignment (CEA) levels and delegating work processes to departments, including the CEA level approval process; the classification allocation process and the unlawful appointments process. The same can be said for SPB collaborating with departments on reviewing their policies and manuals. We look forward to further opportunities to assist CalHR and SPB in continuing these reforms.

AdHoc hoped that the consolidation of the Department of Personnel Administration and SPB would increase efficiency and responsiveness to departments. We are experiencing service delays along with a lack of depth of knowledge from some of the CalHR and SPB staff. Examples of this are inconsistent service and communication from areas, including issues in the Exam Unit, the Exemption Process for hiring Retired Annuitants that have been separated from State services less than 180 days, and the SPB Compliance

Reviews. A factor contributing to service delays could be insufficient staffing levels in some areas of CalHR and SPB.

Additionally, there have been several requests for information from CalHR with short response timeframes, which overwhelms departments. The information sent to departments from CalHR regarding some of these requests has been incorrect (e.g. Furlough Hours), causing some departments to spend a significant amount of time trying to prove that departmental information provided to CalHR is correct. Also, both CalHR and SPB administer some departmental audits simultaneously, and the audits ask for the same information as requested by the California State Auditor. It would be helpful for CalHR to provide longer response times to departments, and to consider coordinating these audit efforts.

- **Are there additional reforms that you believe would further improve the state's human resources processes for its clients or for state employees?**

Yes. Suggestions include:

- 1) update and improve information provided on the CalHR website "jobs.ca.gov" for members of the public seeking employment with the State of California, to make it fully functional (e.g. the ability to search for opportunities by occupational area, and career path);
- 2) streamline the application process for exams and jobs by building a system that allows for the submission of on-line applications and provides a quicker response time to applicants;
- 3) provide current information and technical guidance on personnel/HR processes so that departments understand what is required and have easy access to updated information;
- 4) share best personnel/HR practices with, and between, departments;
- 5) provide more frequent and more proactive communication to departments (the CalHR Newsletter is a good example of this, and we need more);
- 6) provide more assertive personnel/HR leadership at the Statewide level, especially on issues such as technology and leadership;
- 7) improve communication around the SPB Compliance Reviews billing and audit results processes;
- 8) continue efforts to explore additional internet-based examinations;
- 9) provide departments with more transparency around what we are billed for on "open" examinations, such as receiving a copy of the Job Analysis and an itemized accounting on the billing – similar to any normal bill for consultant services.

- **Please discuss two broader goals, human resources modernization and workforce planning, and any reforms that may be needed to enable these efforts in California?**

Resurrect the HR Modernization project for the major reform efforts needed for State government, such as continuing classification consolidations, reforming minimum qualifications for classifications (many of which are outdated) to enhance the hiring process, and conducting employee compensation surveys. Unions need to be partners in these processes.

Assist departments to align pay for “like classifications” in the private sector, to enable recruitment in State government. With the changes to retirement benefits, it will be more difficult to recruit well qualified employees if we cannot pay them a competitive wage. “Workforce planning” for State departments needs to be better defined, e.g. in laws/regulations or CalHR requirements. Many departments lack the in-house expertise/resources to take on this significant function. There is also an issue with doing workforce planning in an environment where we cannot hire and train replacement staff prior to the incumbent leaving a job.