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May 19, 2014

Dear Members of the Senate Budget & Appropriations Committee:

RE: Please Support SCR-116 (Gordon): Concerns “Job Bands” in Civil Service

The New Jersey State AFL-CIO supports SCR-116 and respectfully asks for your support. We thank Senator Gordon for his leadership on this issue.

The New Jersey State AFL-CIO is extremely concerned about the lack of very fundamental information from the Civil Service Commission regarding how this regulation is going to be implemented. In fact, we would categorize the information exchange on this issue between the Civil Service Commission, the legislature and the public to be virtually non-existent during this 13 month long rule making process. And it is not due to a lack of trying by both employee representatives and elected officials. Time after time, at multiple public hearings and legislative hearings, this type of information has been requested, and has fallen on deaf ears within the Civil Service Commission. Six different forums – make is seven including today’s hearing, have been held to try to ask the Civil Service Commission questions on this matter, and each time, they have refused to participate or answer even a single question about the rule.

- April 10, 2013 Public hearing before the Civil Service Commission. Not a single representative of the civil service commission shows up. Public representatives and four members of the state legislature speak to an empty room and a tape recorder.
- May 13, 2013: Public hearing held by the Assembly State Government Committee. Civil Service representatives are invited by Chairwoman Linda Stender to discuss the proposal. Not a single representative of the civil service commission shows up.
- December 5, 2013: Public hearing held by the Senate Appropriations Committee. No participation.
- December 12, 2013: Assembly Labor Committee hearing. No participation.
- February 6, 2014: Civil Service Commission public hearing. Not a single question answered.
- May 7, 2014: Civil Service Commission hearing. Not a single question answered.

Understanding this process as outlined, I think the term railroad applies quite nicely.

And so, here we are, May 19, with another opportunity for Civil Service Commission to answer questions from law makers. If this rule is the management panacea the Civil Service Commission claims it to be, why do the most fundamental of questions remain unanswered?

Those questions remain:

1. What type of criteria is going to be used to develop these bands? Is there going to any criteria at all? Or is this rule intended to simply give broad discretion to management to develop and achieve their desired human resource need?
2. How significantly is this rule going to impact testing?
3. How are promotions going to be handled within bands?
4. What safeguards are in place to ensure this banding doesn't open the door to patronage in promotions since merit testing is being eliminated?

This process has consistently been void of any meaningful dialogue or information exchange and flies in the face of good, open government. The New Jersey State AFL-CIO commends this committee for considering SCR-116 which declares that the regulation is not consistent with legislative intent and we thank you for posting it for consideration.

Sincerely,



Charles Wowkanech
President



Laurel Brennan
Secretary-Treasurer

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