

From the desk of Hon. Maurice McTigue



Louisiana Streamlining Commission

Civil Service Reform

September 17, 2009

Preamble:

The reports that we at Mercatus have read to date suggest some ideas for re-organization in core government departments. These are ideas that may be useful to the Commission in its work.

Rational:

This recommendation is based on the concept of having a 21st century government workforce with 21st century management practices consistent with giving government agencies the capabilities necessary to deliver the policy of the government. Currently, the civil service system and the terms and conditions that apply to that system, are industrial revolution systems rather than 21st century workforce management practices.

Our observations indicate that the Civil Service Commission has responsibility for seeing that the government, through its agencies, acts as a good employer. The Civil Service Commission should continue to play this role. We also observed that no one seems to have responsibility for auditing the human capital of government organizations to confirm that they have the right capabilities in the right place at the right time. We believe that the Civil Service Commission should be given the responsibility to guarantee to the Governor and the legislature that government agencies have the capability to achieve the government's agenda.

We also observe that the current system has rules and traditions that make it rigid and lacking the flexibility for a 21st century environment.

A 21st Century Civil Service:

The following bullet points are issues that the Streamlining Commission should consider:

- Each department would become the employing authority for all of its workforce
- The civil service should move to market equivalence for wages and salary, and the current civil service designations should be abandoned
- That the lifetime protection of civil service jobs should be rescinded
- That the criteria for employment in the civil service should be capability. That it would be unlawful to exercise any discrimination when appointing people to the civil service, particularly discrimination because of political affiliation. That the only grounds for dismissal would be non-performance. That the government would reserve the right to terminate activities as it saw fit, including terminating the positions involved in those activities.

- That the current defined benefit retirement plans would be closed with all existing beneficiaries grandfathered into their current entitlements. That new employees entering the civil service would be offered defined contribution plans.
- That the new employment system allow for seamless exit and re-entry into the civil service. This would dramatically improve the attraction of working in the civil service and also improve the pool of capability available to employers.

Implementation:

This is clearly a major undertaking, and I do not believe that the Commission has the time or the expertise to develop an implementation plan or to identify all the changes to law necessary to put into effect the re-organization before the reporting date of December 15th 2009. The development of the appropriate plans should be done with widespread consultation with all the interested parties. The proposals should be subjected to a full scoping study of all the issues carried out by people with the proven capability to accomplish this scale of re-organization. This would likely require the letting of a private sector contract for this work.

Potential Recommendation: (Suggested wording only)

- The Streamlining Commission recommends a major reform of Civil Service terms and conditions of employment to facilitate a 21st century workforce and working conditions. This reform should accomplish the following goals:
 - Improved managerial flexibility in managing workforce issues
 - Reduced fiscal risk to the Government
 - Improved accountability for the human capital capability of organizations
 - Fair and just treatment for government workers