

Good Morning,

My name is Charles Blockett, Jr.

I was a state employee for 32 years. The last fifteen I was responsible for the state's Classification and Selection system for the 62, 000 state employees working in the 20 departments. In 1996, my peers elected me to be the President of the International Personnel Management Association. I retired from the state in 1997. From 1997 until 2012, I was a small business owner running my own Human Resource Consulting firm. In September of 2010, I was appointed to the Michigan Civil Service Commission by Governor Granholm. My term expired in December 2014.

Civil Service has worked well for over 76 years

The Civil Service Commission (CSC) was constitutionally created to put an end to the spoils system that was often the result of legislative overreach. Prior to CSC, the state was plagued with high turnover because of political patronage. Some employees were expected to contribute one to two percent of their salary back to the party. State employees routinely performed political work while on the clock for the state. Michigan was overwhelmed with unqualified workers performing jobs for which they had no training or background. Conditions of employment also varied, tremendously, across agencies. With no classification or compensation plans, some employees were paid one-half or one-third of others doing similar work. There was a lack of any system for rating, training, disciplining, or keeping records for employees, and no uniform leave or vacation policies or payroll oversight to audit abuse in pay or absenteeism.

Today, we are blessed to have a Civil Service System that has served the public well for 76 years.

We have a state government that is staffed by well-qualified, competent and dedicated professional public servants free from political corruption. We have a stable, well trained workforce of career employees who are hired and promoted based on merit, fitness and efficiency.

State employees protect our safety, our youth and the elderly. They design, construct and maintain our highways. They protect our parks and environment and provide valuable public service that enhances our quality of life. Make no mistake, they make our government work. They are dedicated, hardworking professionals

who add value to our society. Public service is a noble endeavor, one that should be treated with appreciation and respect.

Legislative Overreach

Over the last five years, I have seen four legislative initiatives that have weakened civil service and jeopardized public health and safety--- all because of so called **alleged cost savings**.

The four examples are:

1. The contracting out of 171 Resident Care Aide Workers at the Grand Rapids Vets Facility. This well trained stable workforce that was doing a good job was replaced by a very unstable workforce abusing and providing poor service to our Veterans.
2. The contracting out of 350 Food Service workers in our prisons who were replaced with unstable, poorly paid contractual workers whose service has been plagued with abuse and poor service.
3. The Flint Water Crisis. We all are aware of the disastrous decision to save money by switching from the safe Detroit City Water to the Flint River to save costs.
4. This brings us to the fourth example of a bad legislative over reach. For 76 years we have had a proven demonstrative system for dealing with misconduct or poor performance of state classified employees. I understand that Kurt Weiss has stated that "Between October 2015 and March 2016, there have been 160 dismissals, though the numbers do not include employees who may have resigned or retired in lieu of discharge."

There is no need for this bill!

Ladies and gentlemen, 76 years ago, the people of the State of Michigan felt so strongly that personnel policies and procedures were so vital to the public trust, that they created a strong independent Civil Service Commission to, among other

things, make rules and regulations covering all personnel transactions and regulate all conditions of employment in the state classified service.

The question you need to ponder is what will be your legacy? You inherited a civil service system with a proven track record and a national reputation of providing good service to the public. Michigan CSC was the first public jurisdiction in the nation to receive IPMA's Award for Excellence. Will your unnecessary legislative overreach weaken Civil Service and lead to bad government for our children and grandchildren?

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