

Testimony in opposition to S2171: Merit System Classification Plan

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To: Chair Burke and the Honorable Members of the Senate Labor and Gaming Committee

I am opposed to S2171 for several reasons. First, when a job title requires 'supervision exercised' in its E&E requirements for that job, we can generally assume that this applies to those jobs one might hold after already being a 'front-line' or first level supervisor in the career ladder. First line supervisors would generally come from the ranks of employees who are not yet supervisors and so current statements for requiring 'supervision exercised' does not apply to this level of supervisor. Thus, requiring supervision in a job title would generally apply to middle or upper level supervisory/management positions. I believe it is therefore reasonable to require supervisory experience for these positions.

Secondly, while allowing access to these middle range positions might be beneficial for that employee, it is generally not beneficial to the staff or units they would be responsible for. Basic supervisory experience usually affords increasing knowledge and experience in understanding contract language, disciplinary practices, team work and leadership skills. Allowing inexperienced middle management to attain such positions without experience does not advance good management practices. Those requisite skills are learned. Also, if an employee with no supervisory experience is reclassified into a position requiring supervision, such as office manager, yet there are no other employees to supervise in a particular office this advancement allows bidding on all jobs with this title.

Thirdly, this bill micromanages a large and significant aspect of the state's personnel system. Perhaps those who work in this system should address needed changes if they believe they are necessary. By undermining the knowledge exercised by HR/personnel professionals you are overriding their expertise in the exercise of their duties on behalf of the best interests of an entire state department, agency, or the state as a whole. The merit system classifications often reach across state departments. Once exceptions are made to expressed job requirements it applies to all the jobs in that title and can become the basis for future reclassification requests by all employees wanting that job title. Though individual employees may feel they deserve increased compensation and an enhanced job title because they conduct some work in a different title doesn't entitle them to these benefits when not meeting the qualifications. I think trusting HR/personnel professionals to make such decisions in a fair and objective way is the main purpose of the merit system and should not be changed by legislation.