

September 11, 2019

Comments to The Joint Legislative Management Committee from Linda Leehman, committee assistant.

My comments are about (1) pay structure, (2) the possibility of a research staff, and (3) the need to identify and improve social skills in the workplace.

1. In 2017 Mike Ferrand and Peggy Delaney developed a performance-based pay raise plan for committee assistants. This is the first time since I started working at the Legislative Council in 2006 that there was any document describing how our pay was determined. It was great to have something concrete to explain why we are getting paid what we are getting paid. It really helped morale within the committee assistant group. There will always be individual considerations, but in general I applaud the effort to clarify pay structure.

2. The biggest impediment to a smooth running legislative committee is lack of access to the committee-assigned attorney. The committee attorney my committee relies on is stretched way too thin. We could use him twice as much as we were able to schedule him in, due to his responsibilities to multiple committees. I would check with the attorneys for their thoughts on having a newly created "research staff". Would it be more work for them to interweave with the research staff than going ahead and doing it oneself? But a research staff seems like a good idea to me. Anything that can give committees greater access to their assigned LC attorney would be a huge help.

3. This year I was happy to participate in ongoing gender/diversity conversations led by several of the LC attorneys. If having a new HR person would take the weight of organizing such

conversations away from the attorneys, I would welcome that support. I do worry that a full time HR person might take away some of the impetus and organizational direction we found in many of us to work on important social/communication issues. The discussions we had at several times during the session about gender, about implicit bias, and about diversity in general were extremely helpful in setting the tone of a caring environment at the State House.

As I see in most businesses and public organizations, there is too little respect within the LC working community for social skills. We wouldn't hire someone without computer skills; why would we hire someone without social skills - someone able to work respectfully with others, realize the emotional dynamics at play, know their emotional boundaries and recognize others' strengths and weaknesses. We need continual training in these skills that are needed in any environment.

Thank you for inviting comments from the Legislative Council Community,

Linda Leehman
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