



Legislation Text

File #: 01370, Version: 1

Fiscal Note

No appropriation required.

Title

Recognizing the 100th Anniversary of State of Wisconsin's First Civil Service Enactment.

Body

WHEREAS, Wisconsin's state civil service system is 100 hundred years old this year and on June 17, 2005, Wisconsin will celebrate the centennial anniversary of its civil service law, which requires that government hiring decisions be merit-based through the use of competitive examinations, and;

WHEREAS, in 1905, Governor Robert LaFollette signed one of the nation's first civil service bills into law and Wisconsin's law was also among the strongest because it covered the major portion of state personnel, and;

WHEREAS, the following are interesting facts:

- The "Rule of Three" was in effect, meaning that only the top three scorers from any examination were referred for interviews. One of those three had to be hired. This was first used in 1871 for only a few years and then again in 1905.
- John R. Commons an economics professor wrote the civil service law in 1905 and later laws regulating utilities and creating the Industrial Commission.
- Original slogan of the civil service "The Best Shall Serve the State".
- In 1917 2,552 applicants took civil service exams with 1,545 passing. A 61% pass rate.
- In 1918 3,025 applicants took civil service exams with only 1,231 passing. A 46% pass rate. The commission does not give a reason for the difference.
- According to *Workers and Unions in Wisconsin*, on October 16, 1936, the American Federation of Labor chartered a new international union to represent and organize state and local government workers named the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, AFL (aka AFSCME). There was concern at the time that the various state and local government employers would scrap civil service so they could offer jobs to "depression-poor party faithful" after a change in administration. Wisconsin state personnel director Colonel A. E. Garey feared that the new administration might bring efforts to weaken Wisconsin' civil service system, the third oldest in the nation. The Wisconsin union organized, lobbied, and scrapped. And it won; convincing the new administration that state civil service should continue.
- Today "The Wisconsin Idea" can be loosely stated as the university should work for the good of the state and the state should support the university, and;

WHEREAS, over the years, Governors and legislators have maintained that early commitment to progressive personnel policies and have made dramatic improvements in the law, and;

WHEREAS, today Wisconsin still ranks high among the states for having sound, effective and responsive human resources management practices, and;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Madison recognizes the value of Wisconsin's civil service system and the role it has in ensuring effective, responsive government for City of Madison residents and for all Wisconsin residents.