

## **Letter to the Editor, Wisconsin State Journal**

October 6, 2015

The Wisconsin Civil Service for state employment has a proud history and celebrated its 110th anniversary this year.

Wisconsin's civil service system is grounded in concrete principles. Hiring decisions are merit-based, that is, made on the basis of qualifications, following an open competition and objective evaluation; and removal from service must be based on just cause.

The Walker administration and the legislature are celebrating this milestone by introducing legislation that dramatically changes civil service provisions taking them back to long discredited and discarded procedures for hiring and firing state employees.

Hiring, retention and firing are consolidated in the new Division of Personnel Management in the Department of Administration, leaving little agency discretion.

Instead of objective exams and evaluation processes, applicants would be chosen based on resumes, which are obviously more subjective and susceptible to political influence. A 30-day limit for making appointments will increase cronyism and corruption.

Changing probation periods to two years creates a more definite "at will" nature to all appointments. Other provisions such as limiting reinstatement and eliminating restoration rights make it nearly impossible for employees in layoff status to return to service.

The new definition of just cause allows employees to be fired for work performance that is "inadequate, unsuitable, or inferior." Could this mean speaking in favor of a policy, position, or candidate opposed by the Governor?

The Association of Career Employees urges legislators to reject this bill.