

To whom it may concern:

I am a State employee who is in my 26th year in my position. I am an Instructor Specialist for the Department of Juvenile Corrections. Over the years, I have seen many employees in our department come and go for a variety of reasons. I have noticed that it is becoming harder to recruit and keep good, quality employees. It is more difficult to compete with jobs in other areas. It seems that the State has also recognized this and has been taking steps to help alleviate this problem. I would like to address my concern of long-term employees.

Idaho State employees generally start in their positions and earn 3.7hr\pay period in sick leave, and 3.7hr\pay period in vacation leave. The sick leave never increases, but vacation leave increases every 5 years until the maximum is reached of 6.5hr/pay period. This happened for me at about the 15 year mark. After that is reached, there is no increase. Vacation leave can accrue to a maximum amount, 336 hours, then if not used, it is lost. Sick leave continues to accrue until employment is terminated. As I understand it, half of accrued sick leave hours can be used to pay for continued health care premiums. But this is limited to half of up to 1200 hours, or 600 total hours of paid sick leave. If I accrue more than the 1200 hours, it would just be lost upon termination of employment. Again, it seems that there is little concern for dedicated, long-term employees.

I would like the legislature to consider ways to address this concern. I recognize that vacation and sick leave are financial liabilities on state budgets. However, I think that something could be done to reward longer-term employees. Perhaps an increase in vacation leave could still be granted. Or increase the sick leave hours once vacation leave can no longer be increased. The liability would still be the same in that we would still only use the 600 hours, if saved, in health care premiums after termination. Perhaps accrued sick leave above the 1200 hours could be paid. This might reward people who are dedicated and make the efforts to be to work and help departments in meeting their job tasks.

A plaque and simple recognition for longevity almost feels condescending. I believe that the State can do better in recognizing and retaining the experience that comes with long-term employees. I think the contribution from those who serve so faithfully, often for their entire careers, should be more meaningful and valued than it currently seems to be. Please work to help correct this in some meaningful way. Thank you.

Owen Hirschi
Instructor Specialist
Idaho Department of Juvenile Corrections
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Saint Anthony, ID 83445
(208)624-4209

12/29/2017

To whom it may concern:

As a State of Idaho employee for the past 12 years it has been difficult to watch new employees come in and their pay rate be that of what I made 8 years into working for the state. In other words, the compression that long time State of Idaho employees feel is REAL. One time in the history of my 12 year employment the state attempted to reconcile this issue by giving certain percentages more to long term employees. This was great! It paid off to be here longer and recognized for longevity. One concern regarding that one time nod to long term employees was that it paid better the longer you were in the same position. This was disheartening to those who had worked for a considerable amount of time but had recently changed positions or a new position was created and they moved into it. Another concern was only doing this one year. A bump one time doesn't fix the problem when the starting pay moves up almost yearly. I would like to suggest that years of consecutive service be recognized now and each time the baseline is moved up. Attracting new employees should be as important as keeping long term employees.

Thank you for your consideration,



Cheryl McDowell

I may be barking up the wrong tree, but there is a clause in State code that says employees of the State of Idaho and their dependents are not eligible for Medicaid (Healthy Choices for Children) no matter if they are low income, as we have a state sponsored health care plan. I disagree. Blue Cross of Idaho employees who are low income are eligible for Medicaid. They have a plan available. If you are low income it should not matter who you work for. Low income is Low income. Thanks for letting me get that out.

I was able to get Medicaid for my daughter, but I had to apply for social security, hire an attorney, and wait to be denied then approved. It was a long process. I am not sure anyone at H&W could help as it is in Idaho Code that state employees and their offspring are not eligible for Medicaid. Thanks for listening to me. I appreciate it.

Sherry French

To whom it may concern,

I have been a Rehabilitation technician with IDJC almost three years. In that amount of time, I have seen a tremendous rate in the turnover of staff in this current job field. I strongly believe that our state is currently “training” employees for other states. Compared to national markets, other states have provided more abundant opportunities for employees of the same field. Currently our compensation is based on a merit system. It is my belief and the belief of others in my field that this system is incredibly biased depending on several factors from the culture to occasional “politics” of individual facilities. Every day I am surrounded by employees who constantly exceed our standards, and more often than not, it is incredibly difficult for those achievements to get noticed. Rehab techs are the backbone of IDJC milestone program in Lewiston. Most of the time our hard work is unappreciated and un-noticed. Since my employment at JCC-Lewiston other staff and myself have been involved in 6 suicide attempts, 4 of which could have ended poorly if it wasn’t for the tremendous efforts and awareness by those staff. Nobody understands the psychological damage that this can cause to an employee, especially when they are just expected to deflect it and move on with the shift. We are treated like soldiers in some aspects. Sure we are offered a few counseling sessions, but talking about problems just doesn’t work.

To the employees who continues to come in with a smile on their face, covering multiple shifts for others, or the staff that continue to promote great ideas but get shutdown, yet they continue because of our mission values.

I have seen multiple staff leave for better opportunities, and even staff taking up multiple jobs. No amount of pay can ever compare to the reward of building up youth and inspiring them to lead successful lives, Idaho truly is great state, but we are lacking in this field. We are given the title of Rehabilitation Technicians’ but are treated as just another Correction Officer, clearly we are not. Rehab techs are going above and beyond on a daily basis to develop successful youth. It is disheartening to me that we are not considered first responders. We are left with rule of 90 instead of rule of 80. We see many of the same things that a firefighter or police officer sees.

Steve Horner

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, my name is Micah Buck and I'm from Twin Falls. I am writing with my concern about attracting professionals for hire in the Infant Toddler program. This year we had an opening for a much needed full time Speech Therapist in our area. There was one potential candidate in particular that could have been a dynamic contributor, but after multiple interviews and consideration he was unable to accept the position due to the offered wage not being competitive enough. The position remained open for over a year and our area eventually lost the opportunity to fill it as another region took the requisition. Competitive wages are vital to recruiting and retaining qualified professionals such as occupational therapists, physical therapist, speech therapists and developmental therapists. Nationwide and statewide the demand for these professions as well as their wage is growing at a rate above the national average for all jobs according to bls.gov. Thank you for your consideration.

I have had the pleasure of serving the Town Of Uniontown, Washington for 8 years as a Mayor of Town. While I was Mayor I also managed two Part-time Police Officers that had full-time position in Moscow Idaho. When the two officers pursued other careers we had to fill their positions. The small town could only afford to hire an officer at \$16.00 an hour and we were unable to fill the positions. The problem we had is, if we hired an officer and then put him through (Washington Academy), they would get their job stay employed one to two years and then moved on to higher paying positions. As a town we would pay for the training and then work through the training up and downs and consul the public when the officer screwed up or made a mistake while learning. When the officer then had his abilities and training secure he would leave. The segment of the population that we were hiring was ambivalent towards the benefits. The retirement and health benefits for the officer was not enough to keep him employed or to be swayed by other department. Part of the officers job was to contact other departments to confer with other department and build relationships.

I am 52 years old and I have worked for the Idaho State Juvenile Corrections for four years now. I have seen a tremendous amount of turnover in my four years and I am now the fourth in sonority for employment. I was previously employed as a Corrections Officer in Washington State. I am at my current position as a Rehabilitation Technician and enjoy my job but hate the hours. I am swayed to work at other locations because I have a family, (two girls), my wife works but I still have difficulty paying my bills. I don't consider myself living above my means, I don't go out to eat and don't attend movies or other extra-curricular activities. My low pay doesn't improve Idaho's economy because I don't go out with my family and spend only the bare minimum to keep the bills paid.

My point is that we are getting paid , and my co-workers are collecting food stamps. The economy will not grow if the pay doesn't increase and Idaho will continue to train officers for other border states if the pay doesn't increase.

Thank You
David Smith

I am happy to be able to provide a testimonial in regards to employee compensation. I work in the Medical Records Department at SHS in Blackfoot Idaho. Being an employee of the state is a great opportunity with good benefits, with that being said there are several reasons why the pay should be higher. If you look at a single parent home with two kids, the wage made puts that family just above the income to get any kind of assistance, but is just not enough to make ends meet. Most homes in Idaho have to have a double income to live above the poverty line.

The job tasks that we are assigned are not only essential, but crucial in the operation of the hospital and patient care. In our department, we often go above and beyond to ensure the integrity of the patient medical record, statistical reports as well as making sure everyone in the hospital is informed of proper procedures and policies.

Simply put, every day we come to work to get our job done in the best and most efficient manner possible. The wage that we make is by far lower than most states. With increased wages there is more possibilities to boost a suffering economy. I love living in Idaho, I have lived here almost all my life. Recently we have looked at moving simply because it is so hard to make a decent living here. We work under stressful situations and a huge workload and we continue to do so because we love where we live. When employees are satisfied with the amount of money they are making it boosts morale and people are likely to stay employed longer, cutting the cost of new employee orientation and training. I think that employees perform better when they feel they are appreciated and compensated for their efforts fairly.

I would like to put together a scenario.

What I bring home after taxes, insurance and 401K is about \$850 every two weeks. Looking at that I would like to break down what bills go out and what is left at the end of the month. That is a total of \$1700 for the month for a family of three.

\$600 for rent

\$150 for vehicle and renters insurance

\$150 for Dr. bills (emergency surgery and several other surgeries not planned for)

\$300 for a car payment (my previous car broke, credit is not good so I pay high interest)

\$300 for groceries (That is only \$100 per person per month)

\$100 for fuel (I live out of town)

\$75 for internet (which is necessary for kids in school)

\$75 for personal care and household items (we need to be clean)

\$100 for school lunches (Kids need to eat)

\$150 for power

For a total of \$2000, this does not include any vehicle repairs or home repairs, school clothes and supplies, entertainment, school activity fees, phones or anything else that may come up. As you can see this puts this family of three in the red by \$300 each month. This is my personal situation. I hope this is helpful.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts.

Thank You

Ann Rossi - Health Information Specialist

To Change in Employee Compensation (CEC) Committee
January 8, 2018

Dear Committee Members,

First, let me state that I represent only myself in this message to you regarding my experience as a state employee. I am a licensed clinical social worker who has served our community for the past seven years in the role of a clinician in Adult Behavioral Health in the Department of Health and Welfare. The work that my team does is critical to the safety of our citizens in mental health crisis. Our primary duty is to evaluate risks and safety for those individuals being considered for civil commitment. It is an honor to provide this service.

With that said, the compensation is absurdly low within our field of clinical social work. I am one voice among many here at the State who are conflicted about staying in a role that inadequately compensates to provide for a family. Many of my co-workers have outside employment to help support their families due to the low pay rate we have here in The Department. I would seek outside employment as well if it were not for my school age children needing me at home in the evening. It is somewhat disheartening to see such a discrepancy from the pay rate of the State of Idaho and the private sector in Idaho. My office is close to a hospital that employs clinical social workers starting at 20% more than what I earn as a state employee. My colleagues in the field who work full time in the private sector often make 50% more than I do. These facts are easily proven and readily available for your review.

As stewards of our government, I ask you to consider that insufficient pay continues to weaken our system delivery of mental health services. When we have clinicians in critical safety roles overextended by outside employment and clinicians leaving for more adequate pay, it is our vulnerable populations and communities overall that suffer the consequences. I respectfully request that you take time to review these issues carefully and make necessary changes to strengthen our system of care by paying our state employees a reasonable and comparable pay rate.

Respectfully,
Jamie Arbogast, LCSW

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this email hoping to express my personal opinion on something I think needs to be evaluated regarding pay at State Hospital South. I have been an employee for State Hospital South for 2 and a half years, I have noticed a steady increase of wage for myself each year or so. Just this last year, I was able to go through the hospital and ISU to obtain my C.N.A which was a great opportunity for me to advance myself in the workplace. Before I obtained my C.N.A I was in the temp pool of employees, making \$10.50 an hour, which was okay for me at the time. However, I learned that if I stayed in the temp pool as a C.N.A I would not make any more an hour and would have to work at our skilled nursing facility, Syringa. So, instead I made the jump to a full time staff at Syringa Chalet, because I wanted to change the way other workers viewed working at Syringa. Most temps hear that rumor, that working at Syringa is hard, or boring and we are left with no incentive for workers to further themselves and become C.N.A certified for our unit. That may help us keep certified staff in our temp pool as well. I appreciate you asking for our input on this situation, as an employee I wouldn't mind a pay raise either 😊 but I feel the other issue I expressed is more pertinent. Thank you, hope the meetings go smoothly.

-Conner Schnittgen

Over the past handful of years the cost of living has gone up, grocery costs have gone up, rents have nearly doubled, likewise the cost of houses has skyrocketed. Additionally, inflation has made our money less valuable (as it does every year).

Meanwhile, wages by-and-large, with the notable exception of a couple 3% or so pay increases for state employees, have relatively stagnated; and, with items such as home prices expected to rise by 2% this year & interest rates expected to rise by 1 or more percent, and other economic factors (again referencing things like inflation, groceries, increasing rents, and even folks from higher income states moving or retiring here in droves...) it seems, at least from my admittedly limited perspective, that wages need to rise in order to maintain a healthier balance for Idaho's employees, and in order to keep up with the rapidly developing and growing economy, especially in the Treasure Valley. Boise was recently ranked—so I heard—as the fastest growing state in the nation.

On an aside:

I certainly believe the state offers comprehensive and great benefits that aren't obtainable elsewhere (such as in the private sector). That being said, for employees on the lower end of the wage spectrum (let's say for instance those making \$12 or \$13 /hr.) some of the state benefits are not practically-speaking "useable" because it requires a paycheck contribution from them to take advantage of those particular benefits—in other words, those employees have to choose between enrolling in great benefits that require a contribution on their part (however small that may be) VS. buying food and making rent for the month. So while the state benefits do have a monetary value, lower paid employees have to balance that out with practical concerns, and lose a lot of that monetary value along the way just trying to stay afloat in our current economy.

-- Anonymous

Hello, I started working for the State of Idaho 20 years ago this month. I had just completed a Master's degree program at Idaho State University in early childhood special education. I am a Developmental Specialist with the Infant Toddler Program (through the Dept of Health and Welfare), currently working in Twin Falls although I have also lived in and done the same job in Grangeville and Mountain Home. I have a total of 15+ years with the state (I worked 4 years with the U.S Army and Navy early intervention programs in between state jobs).

So I make \$3 an hour more now than I made 20 years ago when I started working for the state. That means I have received basically a 15 cent an hour raise for each year I've been doing this job. That is ludicrous!! After working for the state 12 years I went to work for the military, and when I returned two years ago, the state would not even agree to pay me what I was making before I left.

It is so disheartening and frustrating. Obviously the cost of living in every area has increased dramatically. I find myself 59 years old, single, and barely able to pay my bills and eat, although I am a State employee. It is a sad situation.

And another thing – all my services are done in rural areas and I am on the road often from 9AM to 4PM or later each day, and yet there is no per diem compensation for this (no same day per diem). I either have to eat a cold lunch sitting in my car, or I have to pay out of my pocket for hot food while I am traveling to serve families from Buhl to Hagerman to Wendell to Gooding to Ketchum to Richfield to Jerome..... And all points in between. Not only that, our referral numbers are higher than ever before and our resources have dwindled by half or more in the past twenty years, yet we are constantly pushed to do more and more and more to keep up. I feel like I'm doing the job of two people and being paid what I've found many teenagers make waiting tables at a local restaurant.

Other programs have received cost of living raises or have had their pay scale upgraded, but that has not happened for the Infant Toddler Program in the past 20 + years. I think it is definitely time. Other states pay much better for the same job, and when I worked with the military early intervention program I made 3x what I make here! I returned to Idaho because my family is here, but I find it increasingly difficult to make a living and have considered leaving again.

This past year we had an opening for a Developmental Specialist in the Infant Toddler Program that was open for 15 months. We could not find a qualified person to do this job and I'm convinced that people who are qualified for these positions are going somewhere else because of the pay. Same with speech therapy – We have not been able to fill an available position for the past 2 year – and I believe that pay is a factor.

It is discouraging to give and give and give so much and yet not feel fairly compensated.

Thank you,
Julee Rose, M.Ed. - Developmental Specialist
Idaho Infant Toddler Program Twin Falls, Idaho 83301

My name is Leland Wassmuth, and I am an audit supervisor for the ISTC.

I have nine positions reporting to me right now. Of the nine, only two of the incumbents have worked for the ISTC for more than 5 years.

For the remaining 7 positions, one is vacant, and the other six have worked here for between one and three years. Most have left because the pay is too low, and there is little chance for advancement.

We recently announced for the vacant position, which is in Lewiston, and only got one qualified applicant.

Just. One.

Our turnover is getting so high that practically all we do is train new people. It takes at least three years to learn the job well enough to be a very effective auditor. Many leave for better paying jobs long before they reach that point. Several of them have left for similar jobs in other agencies that pay more for jobs with similar duties and hay points. Others have left for higher paying jobs in private industry, or to go to work for nearby states, all of whom pay much more than the ISTC, and have similar benefits.

While the 3% CEC mentioned in the State of the State address will be appreciated, it barely keeps up with inflation. I do not think it will attract many applicants.

Can you look at finding a way to where the ISTC can pay our audit staff a competitive wage? We barely get someone trained, and off they go for better pay elsewhere.

Sincerely,

Leland Wassmuth, CPA•Audit Manager
Idaho State Tax Commission

COMMENTS

1. The present compensation package for nursing staff, including Nurses, Psychiatric Technicians and PRN staff, at State Hospital North is considerably lower than every other comparable employer in this area, and in this entire region.
2. The work is very dangerous. The Spokesman-Review (1/20/16) reports that Idaho's state mental hospitals are seeing "increased dangerousness" among patients and are seeking more staff. This article states that state mental hospitals are the number 1 most dangerous place to work as measured by worker's compensation claims.
3. The facility is being pressured to expand the number of patients that are being treated, because of a growing need for psychiatric care in this state. This will require more staff, when there already exists a staff shortage.
4. The present staff is composed of people who are carefully selected for this type of work. They are motivated to work specifically in this mental health field. They are team oriented by the environment and nature of the work. They are highly trained and knowledgeable in de-escalation techniques and mental health needs of this patient population. They are willing to help each other, as well as patients in their period of crisis.
5. The staff is operating with many unfilled staff positions. These empty positions have not been filled, specifically because the pay is not commensurate with other employers in this area and qualified applicants are not being attracted into interviews. The low wage is a deterrent for attracting new nursing graduates or employees commuting from the nearest urban centers. The immediate area surrounding State Hospital North is a rural area with few qualified and motivated people.
6. These unfilled positions require that nursing staff work mandatory overtime to cover the needs of operating this facility. This results in staff errors, burnout, turnover, stress, illness and absence, higher costs to the state, and lower patient outcomes.

It is important to the continued high quality mental health care in this state to bring the nursing staff compensation package up to a level that the facility can be properly staffed.

1. Besides the fact that the compensation is far lower than similar employers in the local area and region, there is no compensation for experience, training or longevity. In fact some newer staff are paid more than people who have decades more of experience, in the field and at this facility.
2. PRN staff, working without benefits or cost of living raises, are the lowest paid employees in the field, in the area, and in the region. PRN workers are important to operate the around-the-clock schedule.
3. Night shift staff are not paid adequately for the sacrifices they make to work all night and sleep in the daytime. They need considerably better compensation.

Thanks for opportunity to comment on this important issue.

Steve Paulson

To whom it may concern,

My name is Scott Sweet, and I have been working at the Department of Health and Welfare for almost three years and would love to voice my opinion on this coming year's CEC. As an SRS at Westgate in Boise, we have only been able to receive a CEC for merit raises, which is very difficult to live on. I know other departments throughout the State of Idaho receive bonuses, merit raises, and COLA raises due to the environment that they are working in, such as with the Department of Corrections employees who work in the prison. As SRS's we also work with the prison population daily and for hours without armed security. It's a very difficult working environment working with offenders as well, knowing that other State workers are receiving better compensation than us. We are also 16% behind market rate, which is very disheartening. Specifically for the Department of Health and Welfare, we are continuously one of the best in the nation, and apparently receive Federal bonuses, however, none of this goes to the workers. We are lucky to even receive some type of raise at all. The Department has loaded our plates by combing several different programs into one position, often forcing us to become a call center as they see fit if the SRS's in their call center are busy, and are CONSTANTLY micro-managed. There are so many in the Department with these concerns, please help us.

Thank you for your consideration,

Scott Sweet

Dear committee;

This will be a short contribution as there is not much to say that hasn't been said already. I believe that I and other state workers are underpaid. While I am sure that some will never be happy I truly believe a 10% raise would be sufficient to get workers to a livable and honestly earned wage. I have worked in the private sector with an agency for over a decade as well as in private practice and I know the values and ins and outs of each system. Obviously there is more money to be made in the private sector and a HUGE benefit to working for the state is the medical benefits, set schedule and holiday/sick reimbursements. I personally have to work a 2nd job to cover my expenses which are not extravagant and include not debt other than the house and no frivolous expenditures. I am simply asking that we receive a livable wage so that at some point I do not have to rely on a second income. I do appreciate all the state has done and continues to do for me and another 5-10% increase will honestly keep me here until retirement as a dedicated employee who brings a lot of experience and knowledge to my position. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Regards,
Ryan Hoseid LCPC

I am thrilled with the opportunity to give a few words concerning compensation for State workers. My first frustration, is that I have tried to apply for promotional openings, 4 times, and was told I didn't meet the minimums. I do have 2 years formal education and 40 years accounting work. However, no matter how I word my application it makes no difference. I've been told that my job titles don't have the word "Accountant" in them so I never get a grade. I would really like to know who the secret Mafia is that grades these applications. They just don't get it. Right now, my job title is Financial Technician. This appears to be the only job title that doesn't have a promotional grade of I, II or III. The actual work tasks for any announcement usually are NOT what the work entails. I have not made this low of pay in 25 years.

My second frustration, is that I have co-workers who have no formal education but had been promoted. This issue chops away at one's morale as you might imagine. I hope allot of employees tell you how many jobs they do have just to make ends meet, since the pay grade at the tax commission is so low and isn't enough for a single mom with kids, seniors who just lost their spouse and the list goes on.

My comment too, is that these young people coming into the work force may have "degrees" but that doesn't mean they passed their classes. As long as they have their phones and can only struggle thru a phone call, they seem to get promoted each time the next higher level is advertised.

Yes, the private sector does have a higher pay grade for similar work. Why oh why are the pay grades not least at POLICY? However, for those of us who have worked in both private and government jobs, we do know the value of retirement, good insurance, flexible work hours, casual dress code, accruing vacation and sick leave and fun friends who have now evolved into "family". The kids don't know this and probably don't care.

When/if we are told we get a raise of 3%, we are expected to be thrilled only to have the medical premiums increase.

Our HR department seems to only give political answers. I feel the commission is at the mercy of HR. High turnover? You really have to ask why??

I feel a bit hesitant to send this email. As the audit trail comes right back. Given all these frustrations, workers will come to work, do their jobs, but will stop striving. -- Anonymous

Dear Members of the CEC,

I want to first say thank you for the 3% rate increase for this coming year. When I graduated college I wanted to work for a public agency because I wanted to do something for the people in my state. I currently work at the Idaho State Tax Commission which is one of the most secure and important agencies in the state. I am still baffled that we are one of the lowest paid agencies in the state but yet we are very vital and need every employee to maintain security for all taxpayers.

Currently, just in the audit staff, or other departments that need a college degree, we have only a handful of people who have been with the agency for more than 5 years because everyone else left for other state agencies or even other states like Washington who offer more money. The department is running on bare minimum staff to make due for all the issues in the state and we are competing with other state agencies for the best employees. At the current rate none of us can afford to live on this income alone and we have to start seeking outside employment on the side. Everyone should be able to make enough to afford to live on the basics without having two jobs but at this rate and the cost of living going up in the treasure valley and the rest of Idaho means what we make won't even make a dent in what we need to survive.

I know that the CEC helps make sure that all employees for every agency are making the same starting rate available but there are the other agencies that get extra funding so they can pay even more. Currently Idaho's revenue is in the positive and has been so for a few years. This extra money should go towards the employees who need it because their agencies don't get special extra funding. I know there needs to be a rainy day fund for emergencies or for low years but for the state to function you need the best people. I ask you all to please consider this when you make changes for the coming years that will affect how each and every one of us can afford to live in Idaho. I do know that some of the difference is made up with the medical insurance but when the vision, hearing, and dental are nothing compared to the bills it doesn't equal out.

I love Idaho and working for the state but I would like to be able to survive with one full-time income. I know once this is addressed Idaho will have the best employees across the board and not just in one or two agencies.

Thanks and have a good day,

Ronnie Winks • Contract Desk Specialist

Dear Change in Employee Compensation Committee:

My name is Margo Miller and I live in Boise. I am an Administrative Assistant in the Director's Office in the Department of Health and Welfare; but, I am not representing the Department, and I am not submitting this testimony today in any official capacity as a Department employee.

I am sincerely grateful for the annual pay raises I have received as a Department employee over the past nine years; and, I am hopeful they will continue due to the following facts supported by my W-2's. In 2014 my taxable income was \$732 less than in 2013 due to an increased cost of my share of benefits. In 2016, my taxable income was \$282 less than in 2015 due to an increased cost in my share of benefits. My point is, the pay increases are not keeping up with the increases in shared costs of benefits or living expenses. (For example, my house payment increases annually due to the bank not estimating enough money to put into escrow for taxes.) As a single woman and homeowner, I have been unable to increase the amount I save each month, because increased spending on "non-negotiables" remains a priority. I would like to be quick to add how thankful I am the Department shares – and pays for a large portion of – my medical insurance and other benefits. This truly is a blessing for me; as, I would go without health insurance if it weren't for my employer.

I am thankful for this opportunity to share facts with you and genuinely appreciate your consideration of a pay raise for state employees for this upcoming fiscal year.

In sincere gratitude,

Margo Miller

CEC Committee:

I just wanted to take a moment to thank you for all you do. I, as well as many other state employees, recognize and appreciate the committee and all you do for state employees. We look forward to the CEC each year as a token of the hard work we contribute for Idaho State Government.

Thank you,

Ryan Beus • Human Resource Specialist, Senior
Idaho State Tax Commission • Human Resources

January 11th, 2018

Chairs Jim Patrick and Neil Anderson & Change in Employee Compensation Committee Members

Dear Co-Chairs and Committee Members:

My name is Jake Thibodeau. My address is Boise, ID

I am writing to provide written testimony as a Classified State of Idaho Employee and as a Custodian Supervisor of 20 reports with Facilities Operations & Maintenance department of Boise State University.

I am in favor of Governor Otter's suggested 3% merit based pay increase. I am also in favor of the State of Idaho picking up the cost of any possible health insurance premium increases.

I would also like the Co-Chairs and the Committee members to consider the idea of longevity and or cost of living pay increases in the future. As a supervisor who gives annual performance evaluations it is difficult for me to give an honest evaluation of an employee's performance when I know that the evaluation will directly impact the employee's pay rate.

Thank you for meeting this year.

Sincerely,

Jake Thibodeau

To the Members of the Change in Employee Compensation Committee:

I'm submitting this written testimony on behalf of myself, and am not representing the views or positions of the Department of Health and Welfare, where I work as a health program manager.

Let me first state my appreciation for the recommendations that the CEC Committee has put forth in recent years in support of merit increases for state employees. This consistent focus on helping state positions better mirror market rates has helped boost morale and a sense of recognition for the work we do on behalf of the State. The benefits we receive are also an important component of the compensation we receive. These help relieve some of the financial stress of covering health care, contribute to peace of mind when illness arises, and motivate employees to plan for a secure retirement.

I began working for the State of Idaho during the recession, when state employees were on furlough and the CEC Committee did not meet for several years. Since 2014, I have been heartened to see the reconvening of this committee and the recommendations in support of the Governor's budget.

I encourage CEC committee members to support Governor Otter's SFY2019 budget recommendation for a 3% pay increase based on merit for state employees, and the current employee benefits, which contribute to our total compensation package.

Sincerely, Katherine Humphrey [Boise, Idaho](#)

Dear Sirs and Ladies,

As you discuss the compensation for State of Idaho Employees for the coming fiscal year I feel you need to take the following into consideration:

It is well known that there is quite a gap between the private sector and the State when you begin discussing compensation. To compound this, as the economy surges forward the job market has opened up with more opportunity. As a result, the State of Idaho is losing out on some really fantastic employees due to the pay. Now with the tax cut package having passed wages are being forced even higher and this is only going to exacerbate the problem the State of Idaho has in recruiting and retaining qualified employees. We're dangerously close to interviewing and hiring employees from the applicants that private employers are not willing to employ. This problem desperately needs to be addressed in order for the State to maintain a fiscally responsible and functional workforce that the tax payers can trust.

I thank you for your time and the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely, Catherine Young

CEC Committee Testimony

1/12/2018

My name is Teresa Hammer, I've been an Analyst for the State of Idaho for 6 years.

I have dedicated my career to non-profit and government work. In return, the state provides me with amazing retirement and medical benefits, a warm-hearted feeling that I am using my skills for the good of mankind, and decent pay.

My main criticism is not with the pay, though it did take me more than 8 years to reach a point of pay equity with my Analyst peers in the private sector, my issue is that potential employers all ask for my salary history and base salary offers on previous earnings, thus devaluing my total net worth to the capacity of my current agency budget. I know I'm not going to make "the big bucks" as a state employee, I am okay with that because I love what I do, but someday I might find something in the private sector that is fulfilling, and I would like to be paid a fair wage when that happens.

I would recommend as an alternative, or in addition to a CEC increase, a recommendation from the Committee to ban Idaho employers from requesting salary history from job candidates during the employment screening and interview process. It would be an honest attempt to ensure equity not only between genders, but among government and non-profit employees seeking employment in the private sector.

I appreciate your consideration of this issue.

Sincerely, Teresa Hammer

I am writing regarding the upcoming CEC meeting to encourage the legislature to support the best possible compensation increase for state employees. While recently supporting increases for teachers [which is necessary and admirable], the legislature has not provided the same consideration for other state workers. On a personal note, I have over twenty years of service with very good evaluations and I am not at the midpoint/policy range in my pay grade.

I have accessed many reports on the state website that indicate high turnover rates in many agencies and that the reason for vast majority of voluntary separations is people leaving for better pay. This situation is detrimental to the State's interests as it increases costs in the need to constantly train new employees. I would encourage the legislature to look at increased compensation as an investment rather than simply a cost. With better compensation, the retention rate would increase, training costs would decline and more efficient service from experienced employees provided to the citizens of Idaho. Furthermore, the increased compensation would raise employee income, increasing their income tax liability, and would increase their purchasing power, increasing sales tax revenue. Better pay for state employees does not and should not be viewed simply as a cost to the State. Please invest in your employees and they will serve you all the better.

Thank you for consideration. Barry Maheras, Pocatello, ID

To Whom It May Concern,

I am not representing the Department of Health and welfare; these testimonies' are my own. Since beginning to work at SHN I have seen a lot of staff come and go. Over the years we have experienced a lot of turn over. Much of that turn over could have been avoided if the employee compensation package was geared more toward cost of living. The current compensation package for nursing staff at State Hospital North is considerably lower than every other comparable employer in the area, and the region.

The work is dangerous. The facility is being pressured to expand the number of patients that are being treated, because of the growing need for psychiatric care in the state. This will require more staff when there already exists a staff shortage. Staff is already operating with many unfilled staff positions. These empty positions have not been filled, specifically because the pay is not commensurate with other employers in this area and qualified applicants are not being attracted into interviews. The low wage is a deterrent for attracting new nursing graduates or employees commuting from the nearest urban centers. The immediate area surrounding State Hospital North is a rural area with few qualified and motivated people. Because of these unfilled positions nursing staff is required to work mandatory overtime to cover the needs of operating the facility. This results in staff errors, burnout, turnover, stress. Illness, and absence, higher cost to the state and lower patient outcomes.

It is important to the continued high quality mental health care in this state to bring the nursing staff compensation package up to the level that the facility can be properly staffed.

The fact that the compensation is far lower than similar employers in the local area and region, there is no compensation for experience, training, or longevity. In fact some newer staff are paid more than people who have decades more experience, in the field and at this facility. PRN staff, working without benefits or cost of living raises, and are the lowest paid employees in the field, in the area, and in the region. PRN worker are important to operate the around – the clock schedule.

Angela Mielke

One's desire to work hard is greatly impacted by his compensation. This is the hard truth. One's view of whether or not the amount they're compensated is just is based on their comparison with their colleagues. Although, he or she may be greatly motivated to help others and thus are inspired to work hard to ensure others needing help are helped, if s/he is not compensated at the level of his/her colleagues, they feel mistreated, not respected for their hard work, and are demoralized. Being demoralized is unjust. Ultimately, we at IDHW have come to realize that ultimately it is your supervisor who can ensure a raise. Those within and outside my program that have received raises had to have the blessing of their supervisor. Here in lies the problem. Unfortunately, we are all bias and have insecurities which impact our decision making and views of others. When I was the director of programs and offices overseas, my bias was in favor of those who made what I call an unlivable wage. These were the fulltime employees whose income was not suffice to live adequately. I focus on these individuals first. That was my bias.

In my program I am the lowest paid program manager, and yet my program is the only program within our bureau recognized through the Public Health Accreditation as a Program of Promising Practice. Yet, she has given others that she hired increases but not me. When I asked her about it, she's avoided the subject. Not to mentioned my years of experience and previous pay are greater than man of the staff making more than I. Can I go behind her back and make a request to have my salary reviewed? Not really. Somehow you need an outside team to evaluate pay levels, outside the supervisors.

One well known problem is that from 2008-2012 due to the economic down turn starting salaries were low. After that starting salaries went up to where some new employees, even those with little work experience started making more than those hired between 2008-2012. The only way someone can get an increase is by changing jobs. But often times a person's previous work experience (I have 12 years international health experience) make them an expert in one area. To move out of that job to another job that pays more (but has the same responsibility level) just for payment results in having an expert not performing the work that s/he's an expert in.

Lastly, the biggest injustice in wages is between Admin Assistants and the rest of the staff. In the cases I just looked at of AAs on our floor, their hourly wage is about 38-48% of their program manager. Their salary isn't even enough to live off of, et we ask them to spend much of their awaking hours here. In short, their compensation is not respectful, it's demoralizing. That's the honest, but hard truth. If we're to do the right thing, then let's start paying them a fair wage.

Thank you for listening, and thank you for all you do.

Collin Elias, MPH
Refugee Health Screening Program Manager
Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

Hi,

I have been debating on sending this email. It usually doesn't do any good to say anything because you always get told we have no money or I would love to help you and I know how you feel.

I have been working for the state for over 19 years. I work at Reg4 FACS, I do the IV-E Eligibility applications for Medicaid, Contract payments and Voucher payments for the vendors we use.

I receive \$14.97 an hour for what I do. I know other people who do IV-E Eligibility applications and receive a lot more money. (Transparent Idaho)

I do know that my co-partner in Reg3 makes a lot more money than I do. I understand that she has a different job title. We still do the same job. Why is there such a difference in the job titles and pay?

I just wish the pay was fair, different departments like Infant Toddler, SR, 211 Careline pay more than our program.

Every Admin Support here in Reg4 FACS is stressed to the max with their work load. Management wants us to keep doing more.

I understand this is a HUB wide problem. I do believe that the Legislature really needs to look at how much they pay their employees.

Thank-you for letting me rant,

*Janice Atherton
Technical Records Specialist 1
Department of Health and Welfare*

Dear CEC Committee,

Please review state employee compensation for pharmacy professional salaries and equality of payment related to current pay rates in the state of Idaho.

Currently the state employs pharmacists involved in education (Idaho College of Pharmacy), Hospital (Blackfoot South and North Mental Health), and Medicaid pharmacy services (Medicaid Pharmacy Program).

Pay rates for state pharmacy professionals, compared to current retail/hospital pharmacy rates are well below the state averages (excluding Idaho College of pharmacy)
Mean Salary for pharmacists (without advanced degrees/residency/fellowship training) are \$109,837 to \$124,837/year.

Ref: <https://www1.salary.com/ID/Pharmacist-salary.html>

Pharmacist job skills go beyond the retail pharmacy what most people see in the communities. Health and Welfare pharmacist are actively reviewing patient Medicaid profiles for appropriate use, approving or denying prior authorization for medications prescribed by health care providers, presenting drug utilization reviews of pharmaceutical agents to board members to consider for prior authorization, discussing cost effective and evidence based therapies to health care providers, presenting exhibits for patient appeals of denial of agents that do not meet therapeutic criteria for approval, establish monitoring/therapeutic criteria for opioid use in Medicaid patients, and provide expertise in health care management of drug therapies/diagnosis of disease states to other departments. In addition to many other duties not listed (Drug policy/monitoring/therapeutic criteria)

At present, Idaho Health/Welfare pharmacists have the lowest salary in the state of Idaho, yet we provided over 2 million dollars in cost savings alone in 2017 with confirmed appeals/hearings of pharmaceutical agents denied for not meeting therapeutic criteria. This does not include the savings to the state with prior authorizations that do not go to appeal and are substituted with a preferred pharmaceutical agent.

Please consider reviewing State employee pharmacist salaries to meet up with current salaries noted above in the state of Idaho.

Sincerely,

Dr. Christopher K. Johnson B.S Microbiology, PharmD,
(Residency Adult Medicine, Fellowship Infections Disease/Epidemiology)

I am a Pharmacy Services Specialist (licensed pharmacist) employed in the Pharmacy Unit of Idaho Medicaid representing myself in this written testimony.

I am requesting that the legislature review salaries within my department as compared to other licensed pharmacists employed by the State of Idaho in other capacities as well as other licensed pharmacists in Idaho working in the private sector.

I took a very significant pay cut (over 20%) when I moved from the private sector (employed as a long-term care consultant pharmacist) to this position nine years ago. I am still not making the salary that I was nine years ago in the private sector.

Besides my doctorate degree in pharmacy (PharmD), I completed an ASHP (American Society of Health System Pharmacists) residency program and also have my certification as a BCGP (board certified geriatric pharmacist) and am also a Fellow of the American Society of Consultant Pharmacists (FASCP).

My current position with the state gives me the opportunity to impact drug therapy for Medicaid participants on a statewide level. This position is very much a clinical pharmacist position which should be reflected in the pay range. I have been a pharmacist for over 30 years now and bring a wealth of experience to this position. It is a source of frustration for me that a newly graduated pharmacist going to work in retail pharmacy earns more than I do.

The on average 2-3% merit increases on a statewide level that state employees receive some years are inadequate when the entire pay range for my position is so below the standard pay scale for a full-time licensed pharmacist, especially one with many years of experience working in an important position to impact patient care on a statewide level. Therefore, I am requesting the legislature to conduct a salary survey for licensed pharmacists with advanced training (e.g. residencies and fellowships) and evaluate the inequality of the pay range for my position.

I would also like to point out that my salary is funded 90% by federal money and 10% by state money so that a salary increase for the three pharmacists in my department would have very little impact on the overall state budget.

Thank you.

Jane Gennrich, PharmD, BCGP, FASCP
Pharmacy Services Specialist
Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

I have worked for DHW since 2002, and am currently and SRS with Treasure Valley Processing Center-

Over the years, there have been changes that have made the statewide SRS's with different responsibilities, and more responsibilities and requirements than others- the prime example is the Child Support enforcement group- they are only managing and working ONE program-

In TVPC- we have SNAP,HCA, Child Care, relative TAFI-

Our workload and what we have to know far outweighs the Child support SRS's- there needs to be adjustments in the payrates to match the work/and responsibilities.

TVPC has a high turnover, low morale and I do believe the pay we are receiving for what we do is far less than if we were in the private sector.

Thank you- Diane Macklin

January 12, 2018

Dear CEC Committee,

I'm an employee of the State of Idaho. I work at the Tax Commission as a Tax Auditor I. I'm an accounting professional who earned her BA, Accountancy degree. The State of Idaho has employed me since November 2016. I would like to share my experience and reality of my life, and why the lawmakers of Idaho should strongly consider increasing salary of the accounting professionals of the State of Idaho, specifically the Tax Commission.

I graduated from Boise State University with my BA Accountancy degree. After my graduation, I got a job in Colorado and moved there. However, due to my daughter's health, at the time who has attended Boise State University, I moved back to Boise in November 2016.

The starting salary as a Finance Accounting Professional at Colorado was \$22.12 with nine months of conditional employment and promised a permanent position with a renegotiation of salary upon successful completion of my conditional employment. My benefit included 140 paid vacation hours, ten paid holidays, 90 hours paid sick leave, and paid snow days. In addition, I had excellent health, vision, and dental insurance and a retirement plan.

I hired here at the Tax Commission, a Tax Auditor I, formerly known as a Tax Enforcement Specialist, position \$17.74 an hour with 120 paid vacation hours, ten paid holidays, 81 hours sick leave and no paid snow days. I have reasonable health, vision, and dental insurance and retirement plan.

After I got the permanent position here at the Tax Commission in June 2016, I got approximately 3.7% pay raise. My salary has been \$18.40 an hour since then.

Since the salary for the Tax Auditor position was non-negotiable, I was hesitant to take the job. However, my life circumstances demanded. Also, I assumed the living expense in Boise, Idaho, much less than Denver, Colorado. However, I found myself in financial strain after moving back

to Idaho. When I run spreadsheet comparing my living expenses in Boise to Denver, I discovered that my annual living cost in Boise about \$3,000 - \$ 4,000 less than Denver, yet I had approximately \$10,000 pay cut in salary when I moved back to Idaho.

After my relocation in Boise, I lived with a roommate for a while, until my conditional employment term end here at the Tax Commission. I moved to my own apartment June 2016. In responsible real estate financing there is a ratio; if a purchaser's housing costs exceed 40% of their monthly gross income not considering the taxes and deduction, it viewed as a red flag. In the renters' market has a similar approach but a little different. If a renter's monthly housing cost exceeds 40 % of after taxes income then it considered a red flag. I'm a renter. I live in tiny 550 ft² apartment. My housing costs 45% of my after taxes income. I'm projecting 10% increase in my monthly rent when I renew my contract with my apartment management in May 2018, and will still consider a low rent by then. (FYI: My apartment's rental cost is fairly priced in comparison of Boise rental market.) Also, I have a student loan, as most of the college graduates in this country, that is approximately 17% of my after-tax income. My student loan debt is below average compared an average college graduate's student loan debt.

I'm an intelligent accounting professional with diverse experiences and acquired and continuously striving to acquire knowledge beyond the accounting profession. I worked with the legal and accounting side of the grants, contracts, and awards besides financial accounting. I worked with multiple different accounting software, platform, and ERP system. Also, I'm a licensed Real Estate Sales Professional, and personally I spend a significant amount of time studying organizational function, leadership, eastern and western philosophy, and human psychology.

I'm a well-qualified individual to hold a Tax Auditor position here at the Tax Commission. My ability to learn, research, and perform my duty has been an impressive experience to my superiors. The sophistication of the technology and accounting software, continuous changes in the law, and constant demand of continuing education for the tax and accounting professionals, the need of attracting and employing highly trained accounting professional becoming more of the concern across the nation, not just here at the Tax Commission. The demand of the motivated, disciplined, and highly trained professional and their knowledge in:

- accounting software,
- GAAP,
- ability to interpret state and federal laws
- conducting researches efficiently, and
- ability to adapt, change,
- able to think mathematically and logically of reasoning and its deduction, and
- ability to critical thinking

is increasing across the board.

Bureau of Labor Statistics 2016 survey showed that the median pay for the Accountants and Auditors was \$32.76 with an average 10% annual increase in demand accounting professionals. Also, my research found, through multiple means, Idaho accountant salary is 26 percent lower than the national average, all the industries, state government, private, and public combined.

As a state employee, I believe, the State of Idaho should be the front-runner who recognizes and values the accounting and finance professionals. Accounting job requires highly skilled and educated personnel. Without proper staff, we are no longer saving taxpayers money. We are incurring cost trying to putting out fires and spending far too many hours to training employees. The tax auditors job no longer a job just anyone can do; it requires highly trained professionals. Furthermore, if we want to encourage our youth to continue their education after high school and help the future of Idaho becoming more well-rounded and socially responsible individuals, then the state needs to take the step to recognize and value their employees who earned their college degrees. If the State of Idaho pays a higher salary for their professional employees then follow that all other private sectors will increase their wage for their professionals.

In conclusion, we all responsible for our own lives and well-being. However, without the support of the employer and the decision maker, it is hard to be a socially responsible citizen who contributes back to the community. The responsibility falls on the shoulders of employee and employer both. It is hard to my superiors at the Tax Commission to hire and keep highly trained professionals to get a job done efficiently. Not many able and educated accounting professionals will hold a position here at the Tax Commission due to low salary. One of the main factors that we have a high employee turn around here in the Tax Commission is the low salary. I believe, hiring new employees' much more costly than paying well for existing employee and keeping them in the long term.

I'm getting further into a credit card debt to just cope with my needs and keep up with basics. I hope I will not to come to the point forced to file bankruptcy but in the big pictures many of us have a harsh reality. However, before that happen, the chances are my superiors will look for my replacement. When the state not paying their highly qualified professionals enough salary that is at least cover their living expenses sufficiently, it is not possible to keep them in their positions. We keep hiring people which is costly; we are unable to attract well-qualified professionals who get a job done efficiently; which end up costing more money than necessary in the effort to trying to substitute. We are spending too many resources to training individuals who good workers but not necessarily the best suited for the positions.

At the end, I wanted to let you know that please understand, I am not saying that the auditors who have no education but worked the commission many years are not qualified or lacking. We have auditors who have the education but not quite fit the job too. I'm merely referring to the need of the highly trained critical thinkers and well-qualified people. If my letter offends anyone, I apologize. I'm trying to cross my message and explain the reality of the situation for the sake of the employer, employees, and the taxpayers of the State of Idaho.

Sincerely,
Deggy Buck
Tax Auditor I
Idaho State Tax Commission • Boise Office

I have worked at the tax commission for 5 years now. I am a top performer in my department. I enjoy my job and my co-workers. I appreciate that the state covers as much of our insurance as it does. I am single and it is difficult to live on the wage I make. My mortgage payment is cheaper than most rent in Boise or Meridian. My car is a 2005 and there is no way I can afford to purchase a new or even a used one. I do not have cable. I do have the internet. I work a second job in the evenings and weekends to increase my income. I live paycheck to paycheck.

My pay here at the tax commission is around what I made working for a bank doing something similar 25 years ago. The wages we make at the tax commission are considerably less than we would make in the private sector and from what I understand less than what other state agencies make due to federal funding.

I know it is difficult to hire for open positions as there are few applicants because they can work in the private sector for more, plus the private sector also offers bonuses or other opportunities to earn additional income through contests etc.

If I made even \$2.00-\$3.00 more an hour I could probably quit my part time job. I believe a wage increase is needed due to the rising cost of living in Idaho and to retain top notch staff.

Thank you for requesting our opinions.

Candace Wright • Compliance Technician

Regarding employee compensation at State Hospital North:

I am employed as a PRN RN at State Hospital North and am speaking for myself, only and only in regard to nursing staff (RNs and psych techs). The wage at this facility is below every other comparable employer in this area, and, in fact, in the entire region. Because of the poor rate of pay, SHN is unable to offer competitive compensation and thus is unable to hire/retain personnel and so has been requiring current staff to work mandatory overtime on a very frequent basis. With the overtime requirement and poor rate of pay, employee morale is poor. There is not much loyalty to the facility and sometimes, not to other employees.

As a PRN RN, at the time I was hired, I was surprised to learn that my hourly compensation was to be the same as an RN being hired with benefits. Every other facility that I have worked in offers PRN RNs a rate of pay 1/3 more than a full-time RN with benefits. For my own reasons, I accepted the wage I was offered as "that was the best the state could do" and that "we really have no latitude and cannot offer you more." I was very surprised, and more than a little angry, to learn that two other nurses that were hired just months after me, were offered a rate of pay of \$2.50/hr above what I was making. One of the new hires was a brand new graduate; this was her first job. I have been an RN for 35 years. I talked with management and administration about the situation and was told that a higher wage was offered to these two nurses "because we can't get nurses to come on board with the lower wage". I asked when the pay discrepancy would be rectified, I was told "it's in the legislature". Over the course of five months, I have checked in with my supervisor and administrator and have been told that there is no changes being made. Excuse me for putting it in these terms but THIS IS CRAP.

I have the fortunate blessing of not having to work. I work because I like being a nurse and sincerely want to help others. I like my job at SHN however, I am seriously considering either working somewhere else or not working at all. My only dissatisfaction with my current job is the compensation problem and my wage would be the only reason that I would leave. This is not simply a matter of a few employees whining about wanting more money. This is a matter of compensating workers with a fair market wage. It is also a matter of treating employees with parity. To offer varying rates of pay to employees, without cause, leads to high rates of employee dissatisfaction and low rates of retention.

I offer these thoughts with the hope that the employee compensation at SHN will become a matter of security and pride for the employees that work there. And then, we that work there, can get back to the business of giving great care to our patients.

Susan Perrin, RN

1/12/18

My name is Deserii Davies and I have been a classified employee with the Department of Health and Welfare for the past 19 years.

I would like to offer the following experience and insight:

Just recently it has been brought to my attention that the State of Idaho is starting new-hire employees into the same position which I hold at the rate of pay at which I am making after being here 19 years.

It has been hard to see the meager pay raises that we receive. However, when you take someone who is at a lower rate of pay it is even harder. When our insurance costs increase it ends up being a wash or you end up making less pay. For me, to find out that you are making the same amount of pay that someone who has just hired on, is humiliating (to say the least). (especially when they bring your rate of pay up to match new hires) How disheartening!!!

I feel like after 19 years of service I should be (at the least) receiving the median pay rate for my position which I am clearly not. Not even close. I am the lowest paid employee in my office and I am among the few that have been working here over 15 years.

This makes me feel devalued as an employee. I am hurt and angry, I feel like longevity and loyalty should be rewarded. I do not feel like it really matters. Am I just a number? I would hope not. I would like to think I am, as an employee and a person, worth more than that.

I have been trained on many positions and performed my job at top peak at all of them. I have always had solid and sustained performance evaluations. I do my job and put every effort into making sure my work is timely and precise. I have a lot of integrity when it comes to my work and I make sure it shows in everything I do. I love my job and the people and department I work with.

If I were to have to go out and support myself, I do not make enough money to do much more than survive. Yet here is the new guy making as much or more than me to support the cost of living or whatever the rationality is there? How is this fair? It seems to me that you are more concerned with making sure the new employees are comfortable than the ones that are here and seasoned.

I urge you to please look at the loyal employees that have been employed with the state for a long time and while you are trying to figure out how to recruit new employees by giving them higher rates of pay, you should be trying to retain the employees that have been loyal to the department and make them feel like they are valued and compensate them for their hard work and longevity.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely, Deserii Davies

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the importance of CEC to the Department of Finance.

As you know, the Department of Finance is a dedicated fund regulatory agency founded in 1905, charged with administering 23 Idaho laws governing the banking, credit union, securities, mortgage, consumer finance and other financial service industries. We share jurisdiction over many of these industries with 23 separate federal agencies and routinely conduct joint examinations or investigations with several of these agencies. For example, almost all of our bank examinations are conducted with either the FDIC or the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco.

One result of our collaborative work with these federal counterparts is that they come to know our examination staffs very well and frequently recruit our seasoned examiners to fill vacancies at their agencies. Accordingly, one of our greatest challenges is retaining our most experienced financial institution examiners, especially after they become "commissioned" (a nationally recognized professional designation for bank and credit union examiners).

Over the years, we have lost many examiners to the federal agencies because their salaries and benefits far exceed ours for performing the same job. We have also lost several commissioned examiners to the private sector, primarily to Northwest banks and credit unions who are also familiar with our staff. Just last year we lost an experienced examiner who became the chief financial officer of an Idaho financial institution.

While in the last few years, we have made progress in granting raises to our examination staff and now have nearly all of them at state policy rates or above, our compensation levels remain far below (many times as much as 50%) what a commissioned examiner could make with a federal agency or in the private sector. As a result, granting increased CEC is critically important in order to be able to boost morale, retain our staff, and hire quality candidates and sustain the costs of training for these important professional positions.

We urge the Legislature to do as much as possible to keep state salaries as competitive as possible.

Thank you.

Gavin Gee, Idaho Department of Finance

To Whom it may concern:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the current compensation package at SHN. I have worked as a PRN nurse there for the past two years and would like to state that my overall job satisfaction is quite high. I appreciate the 8 hours shifts, the expertise of the clinical staff, peers, and the highly skilled team I am proud to be part of. I find the work rewarding and I like my job very much. However, there are several points I would like to make regarding pay of RN's and Psych Techs.

SHN relies on it's PRN staff to fill critical gaps in staffing, largely due to nursing shortages that seem to be the result of wages that are not commensurate with other similar employer in the area. In fact, as an RN with 14 years experience, I am only earning \$2 per hour more than when I started as a new RN in Idaho.

Moreover, there is no mechanism in place for any salary increases for PRN's as we are excluded from the annual review process, which makes us ineligible for merit or job performance based increases, let alone annual cost of living increases. I have worked PRN for 3 other facilities in the area and in every one, I was included in annual reviews and received both yearly C.O.L and performance based wage increases. I have work at SHN for 2 years without any salary increase whatever and while I am fortunate to be in a benefited position, my insurance premiums have increased where my wages have not so in effect, I am earning less money than when I hired. If this trend continues, it will have a serious impact on my earnings.

Secondly, new graduates and new hires are currently brought in at higher starting pay than those of us with decades or more experience and RN's who have worked at SHN for many years.

This is not only unfair, but has significantly impacted nursing moral, This creates "horizontal hostility", leading to decreased job satisfaction and may eventually exacerbate staff shortage through higher turnover. Because the State of Idaho is sitting on a budget surplus it can do right by it's hard working, dedicated staff.

I appreciate your consideration of these issues as you evaluate the compensation at SHN.

Respectfully,

Bobbi Calentine RN,BSN, MS, BS

Testimony for CEC committee

Chairman Anderson and Chairman Patrick,

I listened with interest to the presentations at the CEC committee meeting on Thursday, and I noted with interest the experts that said the average pay for state employees falls approximately 9% below that of the Idaho private sector and the closest surrounding states. Another interesting fact is that inflation, or cost of living, is going up about 3% per year. The Governor's budget only offers a 3% raise again this year. The problem we see at Idaho Public Employees Association is that at this rate, our state employees will never catch up with the private sector, but will simply remain at 9% below.

This problem continues to worsen because, as Idaho's economy continues to improve, it means the state will continue to have trouble recruiting and retaining qualified employees.

We ask you to recommend a raise of at least 4% for state employees. This would allow us to at least begin to close the gap.

We support the recommendation of DHR to raise the policy rate 3%.

Our other request is you begin to move away from a straight merit-pay system to allow across the board, or cost of living raises. The merit only system causes unfairness in our system because the raises are given by subjective means. Last year a proposal was made to give across the board raises to every employee making less than \$30,000 a year, and to allow the Directors the discretion to use merit as a basis for assigning raises to those making more than \$30,000. We ask you to consider this proposal this year, regardless of the amount of raise you recommend.

Thank you for your attention to the needs of state employees.

Donna Yule, Government Relations
Idaho Public Employees Association

Members of the CHANGE IN EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION COMMITTEE.

Idaho Division of Veterans Services written testimony:

We welcome this opportunity to provide testimony regarding CEC and the unique challenges of serving Idaho Veterans. We are also embracing and rising to the challenges of serving over 123,000 Idaho veterans spanning 5 generations, across 4 major wars.

As a self-governing agency, the Division consist of:

- a lean headquarters' staff;
- three long-term care nursing facilities in Boise, Pocatello and Lewiston;
- the State Veterans Cemetery in Boise;
- the Office of Veterans Advocacy, which helps Idaho Veterans and family members obtain the benefits they have earned; and
- the State Approving Agency, responsible for reviewing, approving, and auditing Veterans' education and job training programs.

Dissimilar to the services most state agencies provide to Idahoans, which come in the form of direct payments, our services for Idaho Veterans are performed by our employees. The "homes" provide 24/7 nursing care to those eligible veterans and spouses in need of long term care.

In general, America's nursing facilities, particularly in long-term care, experience high levels of turnover and relatively low retention, especially for nursing staff.

As such, our challenges fall mainly in recruiting and retaining qualified medical/health care related staff in serving our aging Veterans population in the three State Veterans Homes.

Of particular concern is the Lewiston Veterans Home. The State of Washington's prevailing market rates exert considerable pressure on the recruiting and retention efforts at the Lewiston veteran's home since they are less than a mile away from the Washington border. With Washington's initiative to increase minimum wages, as described in the chart below, we feel it is necessary to plan appropriately in order to ensure we are able to keep the facility/homes in compliance with regulatory and licensure requirements.

Feedback from the Human Resource Officers of other state agencies indicate our sister agencies in state government have similar challenges recruiting and retaining staff to their respective offices along the Washington border.

Washington State Minimum Wage Increase Schedule:

Jan. 1, 2017: \$11.00 (from \$9.47 in 2016)

Jan. 1, 2018: \$11.50

Jan. 1, 2019: \$12.00

Jan. 1, 2020: \$13.50

Jan. 1, 2021+: the minimum wage will be adjusted with inflation

- **Bordering States Minimum Wage:**

The following chart shows the incremental increases in each state's minimum wage that voters approved in 2016.

State	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022
Washington	\$9.47	\$11.00	\$11.50	\$12.00	\$13.50	
Idaho	\$7.25					
Oregon			\$10.75			\$13.50

<http://www.seattletimes.com/opinion/editorials/washington-state-leads-the-nation-on-minimum-wage/>

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (May 2014)

State	RN Salary	CNA Salary	LPN Salary
Washington	\$37.76	\$14.06	\$23.66
Oregon	\$39.87	\$13.80	\$23.34
Idaho	\$29.00	\$10.98	\$18.96
Montana	\$29.72	\$11.97	\$18.64
Utah	\$29.37	\$11.42	\$20.71
Wyoming	\$29.23	\$13.41	\$20.82
Nevada	\$38.58	\$15.86	\$25.36

Additionally, in comparison with the Bureau of Labor Statistics' 2016 Occupational Employment & Wage report, the difference between IDVS's salaries in our respective states (particularly the State of Washington and Oregon) is significant. The overall trends reflect that workers in the panhandle are most likely being drawn to employment outside the State. For example, we are seeing employees resign and go work for fast-food establishments as these companies are already paying closer to the 2020 minimum wage. Also, while Idaho institutions produce and license just enough nurses for a healthy labor market across the state as a whole, significant shortages in many surrounding states are attracting Idaho graduates, negatively impacting the supply in certain regions, according to a report issued in May 2017 by the Idaho Department of Labor.

Furthermore, with the economic recovery and low unemployment rates, the healthcare and skilled labor market is very competitive.

Unemployment in healthcare also remains well below the national average. Notably, several healthcare service occupations currently have less than a 3% unemployment rate, demonstrating supply shortages.

Researchers identify that at least 2.5 million more long-term care workers are needed within 15 years in order to keep up with the fast-paced growth of America's aging population.

Our nursing homes have to meet minimum staffing levels in order to keep the facilities in compliance with regulatory and licensure requirements. If the State Veterans Homes are unable to meet minimum staffing levels, they will be out of compliance with state licensure and federal participation requirements for nursing homes participating in the Medicare and Medicaid programs. Noncompliance in this area could result in serious deficiencies, civil monetary penalties, denial of payment for new Medicare and/or Medicaid eligible resident admissions, and/or termination of the facilities' Medicare and Medicare provider agreements.

All staffing needs of the Division are critical to serve Idaho Veterans and Spouses in the Idaho State Veterans Homes. A competitive wage rate consistent with similar employers in the region can help to retain staff, reduce turnover, and maintain proper staffing levels.

We have not been idling standing by hoping for a solution. With the wonderful help from our State DHR office, and based on the above described concerns, the Division has developed a plan to help address the significant pay issues we are facing in this region. This entails bringing salaries up to a \$13.50 hourly rate and having a new hire rate of no less than \$13.50 by 2020. In order to accomplish this, the Division will need to increase all incumbents in pay grades E & F by \$1.50 per hour. In addition, to address pay compressions issues association with the \$1.50 pay increases, alongside other recruitment issues, the Division requests a \$0.75 per hour increase for all remaining Lewiston staff. This request further includes being able to use the One Time Payment Code TSM (Temp Bonus Max) to distribute the appropriate increase an employee should have received for those employees at the maximum of their respective pay grade.

Moreover, federal regulatory requirements continue to increase our personnel needs and operating costs. During the past year, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services have issued unprecedented changes to the federal regulations, which are so extensive it took over 700 pages to explain. The nursing home industry is considered one of the most heavily regulated industries in the nation and these regulations are consistently becoming more cumbersome.

We appreciate your past commitment in helping to meet our staffing needs with ongoing regulatory changes, as well as helping us move our employee compensation closer to market rates by appropriating funding for market salary equity. It has made a difference. Especially as we focus on some of our lowest paid positions.

We would impress that in addition to competing with hospitals, clinics, and other health care providers, in addition to the wages paid by the Federal Veterans Medical Centers, we need to be aware that we are often in competition with other state agencies who raise wages in the nursing positions.

Employee compensation will, however, remain a primary concern in the coming years. We support the Governor's recommendation of a 3% CEC.

We appreciate your continuous support in "Caring for America's Heroes".

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Charity Strong, a Boise resident and member of the Boise State University community. As a member of these communities, I encourage you to support both an increase to the salary structure and the merit-based salary component. Additionally, I support the maintenance of funding employee benefits programs. In order to compete with private industry and further enhance the ability of talented Idahoans to serve the public, both salaries and benefits must be considered. A competitive total compensation package will attract fresh talent and encourage more folks to serve the State of Idaho.

As a Professional Staff Association senator and on behalf of my colleagues, I hope to convey the value of our contribution to public service in the State of Idaho and the need for continuing efforts to remain competitive in the market. Institutions of higher learning provide a unique combination of benefits to the state, which include increased consumer spending, development of a skilled workforce, and innovative business solutions to enhance economic prosperity. In fact, in 2015 the State Board of Education published a study indicating that higher education contributes \$3.3 billion to the Gross State Product. We can only assume that this has grown as institutions exceed SBOE graduation rates and degrees conferred. Boise State has exceeded these benchmarks for almost a decade.

According to the recently published FY19 Change in Employee Compensation & Benefits Report, state salaries lag behind the market by 9% and up to 24% depending on the data analysis model. This lag creates a higher risk of turnover due to pay. In fact, of the 242 employees that participated in exit surveys last year, 45% indicated pay as the reason they were separating from public service. And each of these individuals that turned over their positions cost the organization and, thus the state, up to 150% of the original salary. Retaining talent at market level salaries can actually save the state money and develop talent pipelines and public servants.

But retaining talent is not the only issue that our institutions face. We also face the issue of attracting new talent to continue public service in our state. With an unemployment rate of 2.8%, institutions must attract talent from industry within the state and folks outside of the state. Without a competitive salary structure, we lack the ability to attract that talent and limit the marketplace of ideas that institutions of higher learning contribute to the state. Attracting the best talent benefits the state economically, socially, and innovatively.

Studies show that when individuals are paid enough to meet their basic needs and are competitive in the open market, employee motivation changes from pay to purpose, and that's where we should live as public servants. We have an opportunity to attract and retain public servants, driven by purpose, and winning in unimaginable ways by making strides in moving more quickly to match market salaries. Please consider taking these strides in a meaningful way that considers inflation, unemployment rates, the talent pipeline, and the cost of doing business. What if public servants in Idaho were driven by the greater purpose of service? The benefits would be unlimited.

Dear Members of the Committee on Employee Compensation,

I am a state employee, and I testified in person last session. Thank you for the opportunity to write today. I believe the case for raising state employee wages is rooted in economics and performance. I have witnessed that we are losing our best and brightest people because of salary compression. I have two points that I would like to make:

1. Closing the gap with market wages will require investment *above* wage inflation.

Last year, Idaho overall average wages increased by about 3% (source: Bureau of Labor Statistics). The legislature funded a 3% pay raise for state employees. In other words, we are no closer to market pay than before.

2. The merit pay system is failing to adequately reward meritorious service.

By way of example, consider the effect of last year's CEC on an employee making the statewide average of \$21.87 per hour. At my agency, the difference in pay for this employee between an average ('solid') and 'exemplary' performance review would be **13 cents per hour**. (source: DEQ pay matrix).

Although it is all appreciated, an extra 13¢ is not likely to incentivize many people.

The problems are related, and can be summarized thus: if you provide a CEC at or below wage inflation rates (3%), then to the extent it is merit-based, it will necessarily cause most employees to fall further behind the market.

My suggestion to address both problems is this:

- an ongoing 3% across-the board pay raise, in addition to
- an ongoing 3% merit pay increase.

This would provide meaningful merit pay, while simultaneously keeping the average worker competitive with the market. It would avoid salary compression. Of course, it would cost almost twice as much as DHR's recommendation. However, the reality is that without significant *extra* investment (above 3%), state employee wages have no hope of keeping up with the job market.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Hawk Stone
Boise



Written Testimony on 2018 Legislative CEC Process
By Fred Birnbaum, Idaho Freedom Foundation
January 12, 2018

Summary points

- The legislative process for reviewing the Change in Employee Compensation (CEC) is lengthy, detailed, and flawed.
- The CEC Committee has access to several voluminous studies including consulting work from Mercer on employee benefits and an overall summary provided to the governor by Idaho Division of Human Resources.¹
- However, when reviewing all of the data, it is not clear why and how the governor's recommendation for a 3 percent merit increase and 3 percent salary structure increase was derived. Rather, it appears the 3 percent was arrived at as something politically palatable with the view the overall gap in pay and benefits is greater than 3 percent and the CEC Committee should just accept it.
- Based on the data Mercer presented during its consultative review, Idaho's employee healthcare cost-sharing is far below that of other public sector employees.² I have included a separate document that demonstrates the huge gap between state employee health care premiums and the premiums of self-employed people and small businesses.
- The report to the governor contained a Korn Ferry Hay Group report that suggests state employees are 14.1 percent under the public sector market medium and an Idaho Custom Market Survey conducted by Milliman which suggests that state employees are 9 percent under market. The data in the same report states that state employee benefits are 8.5 percent below market.³ While benefits consist of more than just health care, there is no clear reconciliation of how the health care costs to employees can be so much lower than comparable public sector entities yet the benefits package be under market.
- Milliman's survey of public sector pay increases notes that the average for 2017 was 2.5 percent and is projected to be 2 percent for 2018.⁴ I would note that the 3 percent CEC authorized by the 2016 Legislature translated into a 4.5 percent average pay increase for state workers in Fiscal Year 2017.⁵

¹ Report to the Governor, FY2019 Change in Employee Compensation and Benefits Report

² State of Idaho Benefit Strategy Development, June 2, 2017, p.38, Mercer; as presented to Legislative Interim Committee

³ Report to the Governor, FY2019 Change in Employee Compensation and Benefits Report

⁴ Milliman, State of Idaho Compensation Survey, 1/11/18, p.9, slide 18.

⁵ Permanent Statewide Pay Changes, 3/1/16 – 12/15/16, LSO Budget and Policy Analysis Division.

- Finally, I note that it was reported during last session's CEC that turnover at 14.2 percent for state employees was lower than the national figure of 16 percent.⁶ It is interesting to note that this actual turnover percentage was not reported in the turnover section of the current annual report.⁷
- Based on these summary points, there is no conclusive data supporting a 3 percent CEC at this time.

⁶ Cited during presentation by Fred Birnbaum, IFF, 1/12/17, derived from state data.

⁷ Report to the Governor, FY2019 Change in Employee Compensation and Benefits Report. P.17

Analysis prepared by Fred Birnbaum, Idaho Freedom Foundation

Idaho State Health Plan - fiscal year 2017 - state employees			
In Household	PPO	Traditional	High Deductible
Employee Only - All Ages - monthly premiums	\$47.00	\$58.00	\$38.00

Deductible	\$250	\$350	\$2,000
Co-Insurance	15%	20%	30%
Out of Pocket	\$3,250	\$4,300	\$5,000
Co-Pay (primary/spec)	(\$20/\$20)	20% - after deductible	30% - after deductible
Rx Plan	\$10/\$25/\$50/\$50	\$10/\$25/\$50/\$50	\$10/\$25/\$50/\$50

Idaho Small Business Plan Options - for private sector			
Monthly premiums	Regence - platinum 500	Blue Cross Gold 500	Blue Cross Gold 2,000
Age 25	\$376	\$326	\$316
Age 35	\$458	\$397	\$385
Age 45	\$541	\$469	\$455
Age 55	\$835	\$725	\$702
Age 64	\$1,123	\$975	\$944

Deductible	\$500	\$500	\$2,000
Co-Insurance	10%	30%	30%
Out of Pocket Maximum	\$2,500 / \$5,000	\$5,500 / \$11,000	\$3,000 / \$6,000
Office Visits (Primary /Specialist)	\$20 / \$30	\$40 / \$60	\$20 / \$40
	Generic: \$4 Non-Pref. Gen: 25% Pref. Brand: \$25 Non-Pref. Brand: 50% Pref. Spec: 20% Non-Pref. Spec: 50%	Generic: \$0 \$1,000 Ded then: Non-Pref. Gen: \$10 Pref. Brand: \$30 Non-Pref. Brand: \$50 Pref. Spec: 20% Non-Pref. Spec: 30%	Generic: \$0 \$1,000 Ded then: Non-Pref. Gen: \$10 Pref. Brand: \$30 Non-Pref. Brand: \$50 Pref. Spec: 20% Non-Pref. Spec: 30%
RX Drug Benefits			

Variance (\$)		
(\$328.92)	(\$268.30)	(\$278.07)
(\$410.55)	(\$339.16)	(\$346.70)
(\$493.67)	(\$411.31)	(\$416.59)
(\$787.97)	(\$666.76)	(\$664.04)
(\$1,076.26)	(\$917.00)	(\$906.43)

Variance (%)		
800%	563%	832%
974%	685%	1012%
1150%	809%	1196%
1777%	1250%	1847%
2390%	1681%	2485%

Idaho Individual Plan Options - for self employed			
Monthly premiums	MHC Link Gold St. Luke's Hospital Only	MHC Link Gold St. Luke's Hospital Only	Bridge Span - Gold 1200
Age 25	\$350	\$350	\$411
Age 35	\$431	\$431	\$493
Age 45	\$526	\$526	\$602
Age 55	\$818	\$818	\$936
Age 64	\$1,051	\$1,051	\$1,203

Variance (\$)		
(\$303.48)	(\$292.48)	(\$372.69)
(\$384.09)	(\$373.09)	(\$455.32)
(\$478.72)	(\$467.72)	(\$563.60)
(\$770.67)	(\$759.67)	(\$897.69)
(\$1,004.43)	(\$993.43)	(\$1,165.18)

Variance (%)		
746%	604%	1081%
917%	743%	1298%
1119%	906%	1583%
1740%	1410%	2462%
2237%	1813%	3166%

Deductible	\$750	\$750	\$1,200
Co-Insurance	30%	30%	10%
Out of Pocket Maximum	\$5,750	\$5,750	\$7,150
Office Visits (Primary /Specialist)	\$25 / \$40	\$25 / \$40	First 4 visits at \$30 then 10% co-insurance after deductible
	Generic: 20% Ded then: Pref. Brand: 35% Non-Pref. Brand: 50% Non-Pref. Spec: 40%	Generic: \$10 Ded then: Pref. Brand: 35% Non-Pref. Brand: 50% Non-Pref. Spec: 40%	Generic: \$10 Ded then: Pref. Brand: 35% Non-Pref. Brand: 50% Non-Pref. Spec: 40%
RX Drug Benefits			

I understand the CEC Committee is taking public comment through January 12, 2018. My comments will be brief, as it is the end of the work week and I am tired. Yes, I am a state employee, and my comments are my own.

I read the many stories in Betsy's Blog, regarding the many recent conversations about employee compensation. I do believe in at least a 3 percent CEC. Frankly, it should be more. Additionally, I am not a compensation expert, but based on what I read in local, regional and national news, I know that as compensation in Idaho and the surrounding states changes (or does not), we must take a deep dive into the compensation of Idaho's state employees. It seems to me, that in general, the focus regarding pay has historically been the identification of a CEC percentage rate. I do not discount this focus, as the overall percent of compensation is not fully competitive, as reported by the Idaho Division of Human Resources. However, I suggest that in addition to a 3 percent CEC for 2018, it is critical to ensure continued, comprehensive review of compensation, as I believe competition for essential knowledge, skills, and ability will only tighten.

I read in Betsy's Blog the questions the Committee recently asked our many compensation professionals. Thank you! Your questions are instrumental to exploring compensation beyond percentage. May I also encourage that you ask state agencies about what, beyond pay, gets in their way of effective compensation. It might be "red tape," rules, the application process, the inability to be creative in pay. I do not know what you will hear, other than I believe compensation is beyond "just an annual CEC," and is different for each agency.

Thank you, again, for continuing to welcome comment about CEC.

Sincerely,

Heidi Graham

January 12, 2018

2018 Change in Employee Compensation Committee

Jennifer VanCour, LMSW – Safety Assessor, Department of Health & Welfare, Child Welfare

Distinguished committee members:

Good Morning. My name is Jennifer VanCour and I live in Boise. I am a Safety Assessor at the Department of Health and Welfare, but I do not provide this written testimony as a representative of the Department or in my official capacity as a Department employee.

As you may know, being a Safety Assessor in Child Welfare is taxing emotionally and physically as we often serve the most vulnerable populations of our state during highly stressful and chaotic encounters. Furthermore, we often are understaffed due to high turnover. One pivotal reason people leave this work is the lower pay compared to other social work positions in the area. Most jobs I have worked as a social worker in Boise are far less stressful, lower caseload, and pay \$4-8 more per hour. Also, If I drive two hours away to Baker City, Oregon where my step-mother works in the equivalent job as I do, similar experience and education, lower cost of living, and similar benefits, she makes \$15,000 more per year than I do, *starting out*. I choose to stay in my position due to my dedication and passion for this line of work, despite the lower pay, but it seems, that passion can burn out quickly, especially when the pay is not competitive.

I implore the committee members to consider increasing the pay rate for social workers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer VanCour" with "LMSW" written in smaller letters below the name.

Jennifer VanCour, LMSW

Friday January 12, 2018

I would like to take this opportunity to address the Legislature about health insurance for state employees.

Currently our Health Insurance does not cover anything weight related.

I am obese. I have been this way for nearly 30 years. I have tried diets. I have joined the gym. I have done water aerobics. I have taken prescription medications for weight loss. You name it, I have tried it.

Now I have a bad back and arthritic knees because of my weight, as well as sleep apnea. I have a very large, fatty liver. I cannot take pain medications because of my liver. I have had injections and spinal ablations for spinal pain. The pain in my back and my knees keeps me from walking any distance or standing for more than just a few minutes, without the need to sit. My husband does the majority of shopping for us now. If I want to go shopping, I have finally learned to use the electric cart at the grocery store.

Last year I had enough Dr visits, procedures, treatments, Physical therapy, MRI's, CT's, Xrays, and other tests done that I met my annual out of pocket for our insurance early in the year. My out of pocket is \$4,800.00. Once I met that out of pocket, my insurance had to pay 100% for the rest of the year. If the \$4,800.00 is my 20% obligation, then the cost for the year was actually closer to \$30,000.00. Along with that cost, is the cost of my taking time off of work to have procedures, treatments or testing done. As well as the sick time I take off simply because I am in pain some days and unable to work, or work at a less than optimal level. The cost of the weight loss surgery that my doctor wants me to have would be approximately \$14,000.

I do not have Heart Disease, Diabetes, or High Blood Pressure. But my doctor expects me to develop some or all of these things in the future should my weight not decrease. Creating additional costs for those treatments and testing, as well as more time off work.

I think it's time for our insurance coverage to change and begin covering weight loss.

Thank you,

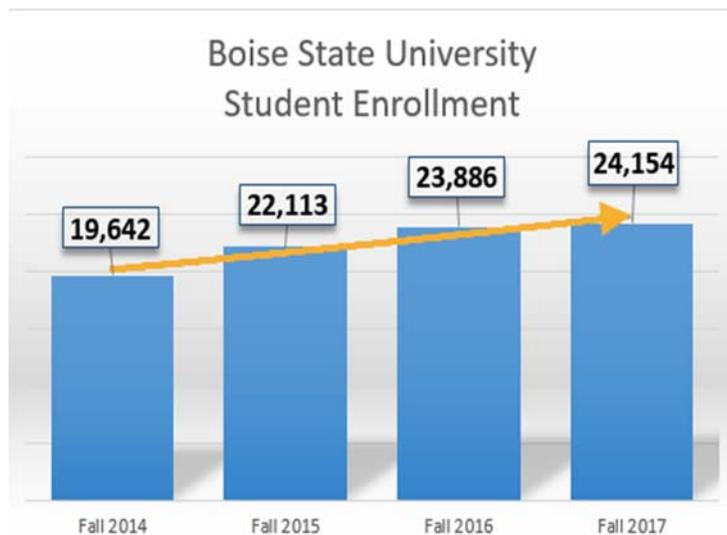
Samanthia Warren RN

Region 5 DHW

January 12, 2018

Dear Members of the CEC Committee,

The Association of Classified Employee Senate (ACE) at Boise State University is urging you to support a wage increase for state classified personnel. The invaluable support positions filled by classified staff here at Boise State University are instrumental in enabling student retention and growth, as well as provide the foundation for administration, faculty and students to excel on this campus. Local and state economies greatly benefit from the student retention and growth of Idaho's academic institutions. Due in part to the efforts of classified employees, Boise State's student enrollment has increased by 20 percent over the last three years, as noted in the graph below.



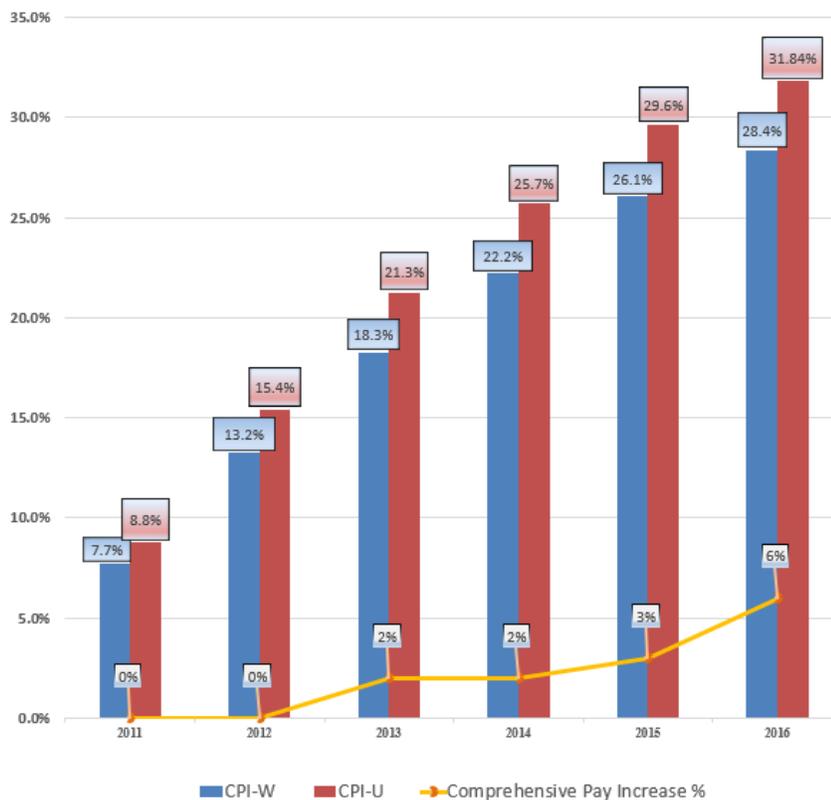
Our association has been petitioning the committee, through individual classified employees and the Boise State ACE President, in effort to understand the current inequality found in salary comparisons between our state employees and other Idaho government positions. Our classified employees are disheartened to know that comparable Boise State University positions are paid 30% less than those found in other Idaho government entities. For all that our classified staff do to help support the local and state economies through their public service employment; it is demoralizing for these employees to need public assistance or to work multiple jobs to support their families.

Boise State professors John Church Ph.D. and Samia Islam Ph.D. has done an in-depth analysis on the prospective living wage required for a Boise, Idaho resident using the wage data from Transparent Idaho. Two staggering findings came from this analysis:

- 13% of the Boise State classified staff does not make the minimum living wage needed for a single adult with no dependents.
- If an employee has one dependent, 73% of Boise State’s classified staff would not meet the minimum living wage requirement.

From 2011 to 2016, the CEC approved a cumulative six percent wage increase. As the graph below illustrates, Idaho’s wage increase has fallen behind the average CPI. Overall, the classified wage is in a 14.7% deficit for CPI-W, and 17.04% deficit for CPI-U.

Cumulative Total of CPI and Wage Increase



CPI-

Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers series

CPI-U: All Urban Consumers series

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics Provided by the Idaho Department of Labor, Public Affairs

W:

Currently, the state's classified staff are vastly underpaid, and while the employee benefits provide some hope of a future reprieve, the benefits may be rendered irrelevant if retirement benefits are spent paying off personal loans that were necessary to bridge the gap between wages earned and wages required to live and survive in today's local economy.

We implore the members of this committee to help support the necessary wage increases for Idaho's classified workers.

Sincerely, Association of Classified Employee Senate

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**IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME**

600 S Walnut / P.O. Box 25
Boise, Idaho 83707

C.L. "Butch" Otter / Governor
Virgil Moore / Director

Testimony of Ed Schriever, Deputy Director, Idaho Department of Fish and Game

I am Ed Schriever, Deputy Director of Operations for Idaho Department of Fish and Game. I am here today representing Director Virgil Moore.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today about how Idaho Fish and Game has leveraged director discretion for CEC to positively impact our staff. I would also like to share some of our challenges as we continue to have in ensuring our compensation package is competitive enough to attract and retain our dedicated employees. I want to emphasize that CEC is an important tool in meeting this challenge.

Over the last several years with the support of the Governor, this committee, and JFAC, we have been able to implement pay distribution plans to target the unique attributes of our workforce. This allowance for director discretion has allowed us to positively impact important workforce issues of compression and salary inequity. It has also allowed us to substantively benefit the bottom line of take home pay for employees on a merit basis and make progress with attracting and retaining employees in certain sectors such as information technology.

IDFG is dedicated fund agency, funded by a unique mix of discretionary and nondiscretionary funds. Nearly 50% of our budget comes from license fees, which support operations and deliver critical services to our customers. The recent history of national economic conditions has demonstrated that this revenue can fluctuate substantially, so we value efficiency and effectiveness – values that are enabled by competent employees and high employee retention rates. CEC helps us address workforce issues to deliver these values.

IDFG has been and remains fully committed to funding employee compensation in alignment with the spirit and intent of Idaho Code. Because of this standard, the Director's Office continually works to identify efficiency improvements within our organization to ensure all of our resources are fully utilized and to recoup long-term savings to reinvest in staff. As a result, tough decisions have been made, such as eliminating 10 positions in FY15, devolving our in-house construction crew in FY18, and creating a structured internal process to evaluate individual vacancies and programs, thereby decreasing our reliance on temporary personnel and asking staff to take on more responsibility.

These strategies have enabled us to use salary savings for early implementation of any approved CEC and also add additional funds to permanent raises. Doing so allows us to target specific areas of concern, whether it's long standing compression issues, retention risks, or other salary inequities. A great example is the work to significantly alleviate severe compression issues within our Enforcement ranks in our FY15 and FY16 distributions. The compression was the

Keeping Idaho's Wildlife Heritage

combined result of long term system issues such as inconsistent pay raises and changes to the pay structure, and much less opportunity for our enforcement officers to promote or laterally transfer to a different position. The bottom line was that our enforcement officers, due to their dedicated commitment to their jobs, communities, and longevity, were lagging significantly behind their counterparts in other disciplines. Our ability to tailor the CEC distribution plan to target these issues significantly alleviated this compression. While these distributions improved morale throughout the department, the impact on our enforcement personnel was truly remarkable.

The FY17 and FY18 CEC distributions did not target specific areas of compression because we had addressed needed corrections in FY15 and FY16. Our plan for FY19 would be to continue with the consistent application on a merit basis that we have developed to keep parity within our department disciplines and different job classes.

Another crucial component to our effective pay distribution has been in the foundation of our performance evaluation rating system which drives our merit based pay philosophy. We have made significant strides over the past five years in providing consistent and accurate rating distribution across the department through an increased focus on training and rating calibration. This has greatly improved our agency-wide rating distributions and clearly delineated performance levels of employees. The result is clearer accountability, improved morale, and an accurate distribution of changes in employee compensation to recognize and reward our highest performers.

I'd like to share with you an excerpt from one of several dozen emails the Director's Office received after the early implementation of FY18 CEC which included a 3% CEC, and additional 1% the department was able to identify through strategic salary savings that we invested on a continuing basis:

"...I wanted to express my appreciation for your efforts in regard to salary compression and CEC the past few years. It was only 3 years ago, I was looking for employment outside the agency, because frankly, I could not support my family on my income. For my family and many others, the increase in pay has made a substantial improvement in our lives. I have seen a noticeable difference in stress levels and morale among many other coworkers as well. Again, thank you and know your efforts do not go unnoticed or unappreciated."

This email is from one of our biologists on the front line of day-to-day field operations. Our employees are highly trained professionals with years of experience and substantial formal education; the majority has master's degrees and many have doctorate degrees. They work long hours often in remote and difficult work conditions throughout the year in order to fulfill the Fish and Game mission to preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage Idaho's fish and wildlife resources and serve the citizens of Idaho.

Idaho's abundant natural resource opportunities make employment at IDFG appealing to many natural resource professionals. However, for every story I can tell you like the one above, I can tell you about the employees we have lost through federal and other state's competition. In all cases, these are employees in which we have made significant investment and cannot afford to

lose. They are experienced, high performers with the capacity to move into critical leadership roles. And while our long-term succession planning cannot afford for these people to leave, we are often unable to find a way to keep them. This is challenging for our mid-level management because 20% of our employees will likely retire in the next several years and we may not have experienced individuals available to move into those roles.

Over the last year we have lost 10% of our professional level Biologists, with many of these employees being cherry picked by the federal government for 20% to 25% more for the same position, sometimes even in the same location. We also struggle with retention of our Conservation Enforcement Officers. These people are highly trained, hold full peace officer status through POST, and most have a minimum of a bachelor's degree. They routinely confront dangerous situations in remote locations. The people who become Conservation Officers don't do it thinking they will get rich. They do it because they are passionate about protecting the resource and committed to public service. We recently lost an officer who exhibited significant leadership potential. This employee took a federal enforcement job in the same work location, for a 207% increase in pay.

I share with you these examples not to say the State or IDFG aren't doing enough. I share them with you to highlight that IDFG has been extremely fortunate to benefit from both the continued support of the CEC and our internal commitment and ability to reinvest in staff to the fullest extent possible. We have made dramatic improvements over several years and we clearly see it reflected in the morale of our staff. We have avoided some loss of experienced and valued staff. Our department average compa-ratio has moved from 84% in FY10 to 93% in FY18. This is a huge success and we thank you for your role in achieving this success.

However, from an agency perspective, we must never think that we have done enough, or that we can slow down. Your ongoing commitment to fund consistent Changes in Employee Compensation and changes to the pay structure ensures that we do not fall further behind. We've made some great gains and we are positioned to continue to improve our ability to recruit and retain the best and brightest. On behalf of Idaho Fish and Game, I thank you again for your continued commitment to our state government's greatest resource, our employees.

Job Requirements:

I work in the Multistate Audit section. I was hired on at \$17.78 an hour. While the job description for my position does not state that you have to have a degree to do the job, in reality it unquestionably requires it. The generally expected time to fully understand and become completely competent at this job is a minimum of five years. Everyone that currently works in the Idaho State Tax Commission Multistate Income Tax Audit group audit has a degree. Some of them have more than one bachelor's degree, Master's Degree, possesses a CPA or IRS enrolled agent designation. The average federal return that we review during audits is over 250 plus pages with several subsidiaries both foreign and domestic. We have to be able to understand the complexities of C Corps, S Corps, and Partnerships. We have to know where to find the information on those returns and how it applies to the State of Idaho. We need to know how to read and understand the information included in Audited Financial Statements and publicly traded company SEC 10-K filings and other legal and financial documents. We take all of this information and compare it to the federal and state returns that are filed and examine them for compliance with the federal Internal Revenue code and all Idaho's income tax code statutes and rules. To expect this level of expertise from someone without a degree is not very reasonable.

Value that we bring to the State:

My manager recently stated that we bring in on average \$2,000.00 an hour per multistate auditor for the State. In our annual meeting it was pointed out that Multistate Audit section brought in more money than any other section in the tax commission. To be truly effective at our jobs it does require us to go out on field audits and work directly with the corporation's accountants and legal staff. While we are doing this, we are the face of the Idaho State Tax Commission to those companies. I believe that we portray the Idaho State Tax Commission in a very positive light with professionalism and class. We bring a lot of value to the Idaho State Tax Commission and work very hard for our pay. Some of the top auditors are able to find millions of dollars that are owed to the State of Idaho. The largest single audit that I know of was over \$8,000,000.00.

Employee turnover cost:

With the previously stated minimum time of 5 years to master the multistate auditor's job, the replacement cost for that mastery assuming a yearly raise of only 3% would be \$200,000.00 in just the employees' wages. Those wages do not reflect the necessary progression to level 2 and level 3 which have different pay bands. Nor does it reflect the time of the current level 2, 3 and 4 audit staff to train these auditors. It also excludes the cost to the state for travel to training events and all the cost associated with travel related to field audits. The true cost of turnover in the multistate audit group is substantially more and I would estimate it to be somewhere closer to \$500,000.00 per employee that has obtained true mastery of the position and is bringing in the maximum amount for the state. By retaining auditors and ensuring that they master all of the job requirements they will be able to handle the most complex audits with the most potential revenue for the State. We only have four auditors that have been in the position at least five years. Two of those auditors are set to retire at any time, as they have met the rule of ninety.

Cost of living:

The Economic Policy Institute estimates it cost \$56,491.00 a year to live in Boise Idaho. This represents what it takes out of pocket to live in Boise. According to Debt.org the average student loan debt in 2017

was \$37,172. This results in repayment on average of approximately \$350.00 per month. According to Edmunds.com the average payment for a new car is \$479.00 per month. There is no way that an auditor level 1 can support a family of four on their pay alone. After everything that is deducted out of my pay, I do not take home half of that amount. Luckily my wife makes more money than I do and I do not have to work a second job like so many others do.

Comparable Opportunities:

- The Multistate Tax Commission (MTC) starts multistate corporate tax auditors at \$63,700.00 and allows you to work from home as long as you are within 50 miles of an airport. Assuming a 40 hour work week working 52 weeks a year that amounts to \$30.63 an hour.
- Washington State currently has an opening for assistant state auditor 1, 2, 3 with multiple locations in WA. That starts at \$2,984.00 – \$5,920.00 a month or 18.65 – \$37.00 an hour based on a 40 hour work week. (the position is not as demanding as a multistate auditor)
- Oregon has an Accountant 1 position currently open that starts at \$3,129.00 - \$4,545.00 monthly. Or \$19.56 - \$28.41 an hour based on a 40 hour week.
- Nevada has an Accountant 2 position currently open that starts at \$50,509.00 - \$75,147.00 per year. Or \$24.28 – \$36.13 an hour based on a 40 hour work week and 52 weeks a year.
- Wyoming currently has a Wagering Transactions accountant position open that starts at \$3,454 - \$4,318 monthly. Or \$21.59 - \$26.99 an hour based on a 40 hour work week.
- Montana currently has an accountant position with the department of fish, wildlife and parks that starts at \$26.20 an hour.

Conclusion:

The multistate auditor performs duties and requires more expertise far beyond that of the average auditor. The Idaho State Tax Commission is substantially behind the pay curve for comparable auditor positions. The average pay for the listed job opportunities would be 23.49 on the low side and 30.92 on the upper end. The Idaho State Tax Commission starts an auditor level 1 at 17.78 regardless of the job they actually do. Many of those positions are far less demanding than the multistate auditor's job. The auditor level 1 needs to have a substantial wage increase to meet the skyrocketing cost of living in Idaho. The multistate business auditor position needs to be reevaluated and reclassified with a pay scale in sync with its requirements and job duties. Doing the same multistate auditing for MTC pays \$63,700.00 a year. A top multistate auditor can find in one audit the money that would more than cover a 30 year career with the state at this more reasonable pay.