

CEC Testimony Compilation

Good afternoon,

DHW is a nearly 40% telework division that will be vastly effected by the upcoming changes to the telework policy for State Employees. People will be forced back to the office, parking lots congested, gas usage up(\$\$\$), and generally more tension will be created by enclosed cramped work spaces. Telework was an amazing benefit and with it being taken by legislatures they should be trying to make up for it by pushing for higher wages to help ease the issue of wrongfully removed telework and to provide a healthier/happier life balance for the state's employees.

I would hope that my name can be kept anonymous with this feedback.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

Region 4 - Westgate

[REDACTED]

 [REDACTED]

I am actually surprised at the wage scale and vacation accrual scale for state employees. The state is 4-5 dollars less per hour than all the other call centers in the valley and on a par with fast food workers and even less than a few.

[REDACTED]

I have been with the State of Idaho for almost 3 years. I currently make \$26/hr. I have worked hard to work my way up to a better hourly wage and although my pay is better now it is still not enough to meet basic costs of living here in Idaho. The average 1 bedroom apartment in Boise is \$1500-\$1600 month. Please consider doing everything you can to increase the wages for State of Idaho employees.

Thank you.

[REDACTED]

www.PERSI.Idaho.gov

"Helping Idaho Public Employees Build a Secure Retirement"

Hello,

With the timing of the release of the email requesting feedback, compounded with being off work for the holidays prior to deadline next week, I will make my thoughts brief.

-While IDHW does have good benefits, the pay continues to be inferior to the private sector. The CECs have been very helpful for myself and my employees. I really hope they will continue so that I can make a living and that my staff can as well. Employee retention is very important and wages are a huge factor for employees, especially with recent inflation, and the price of good, services and housing. As a supervisor it is extremely hard to retain qualified employees. It is also very taxing to go through the hiring process and train new employees, just for them to find a better opportunity elsewhere. With the recent reorganization for DBH, burnout is a common theme. While CECs are not a lot of money, they do go a long way to help retain an employee. The employees for the Department have gone to great lengths over the past few years to provide for Idahoans. The Pandemic forced many employees into telework. With telework, many employees have had to adjust their homes and use their own money to create a home office. As this became the new norm countless employees altered their lifestyles and changed their vehicle, daycare, budgets and countless other things. As a supervisor, this past year I have personally been able to hire a full staff (for the first time in three years, for years I didn't even get any qualified applicants!). The work life balance was a HUGE selling point. We have hired a lot of people under the premise of telework and that is now being taken away to a large degree. Please approve CECs to help me to retain staff and allow other teams to hire staff. Myself and many other state employees work a second and sometimes a third and fourth job to make ends meet. While CECs are not a lot, every little bit helps. Thank you for reading this and please continue to support our valuable state employees.

Respectfully submitted,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

IDHW – Division of Behavioral Health

[REDACTED]

Hello

I have attached my opinion letter for the Change in Employee Compensation Committee. Please let me know that my letter was received and if there is anything else you need from me.

December 22, 2023

[Redacted]

Boise, ID 83704

Thank you

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

To whom it may concern within the Change in Employee Compensation Committee

Thank you for this opportunity to voice my opinion regarding my current wages and benefits. I was born and raised in Idaho. I am grateful for the quality education I received at the University of Idaho. I own a modest home here in the Boise area. Due to the drastic increase in the cost of living, I have wondered many times in the past year if I can afford to continue living and working in our beautiful state.

I currently work as a service coordinator for the Infant Toddler Program. I am a full-time state employee with benefits. Prior to this position, I worked in the Children's Developmental Disability Program as a contracted case manager. I am also a certified special education teacher. I pursued my current position for the benefits, specifically. While the security of a consistent paycheck, retirement program, and potential student loan forgiveness gives me more confidence in my financial planning and my future, my current wages do not cover my basic monthly expenses today. It is not uncommon for myself, and many of my coworkers, to pursue side work and even secondary regular jobs to make ends meet. This alone greatly reduces my quality of life and potential longevity in this position.

What upsets me the most is that I am truly passionate about the work I do. I have worked in the disability support field in some capacity since I was 19 years old. During that time (22 years), I have had the opportunity to work with, and learn from, many other incredible and equally passionate people. I am sure it is not news to you that in this field we are also carrying extremely high caseloads due to the population increase in our state. It is my greatest fear that if we continue to be overworked and under paid, the well-trained and passion led people in these positions will be forced to leave them. When this happens, these necessary programs and the people they support will suffer in countless, devastating ways.

It is my opinion that you are in the position to change lives. Not only the lives of the State of Idaho employees who currently work tirelessly to keep these programs afloat, but the lives of all Idaho residents that we serve now and will serve in the future. I strongly urge you to look beyond the bottom line when making such important decisions. Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely, [Redacted]

Season Greetings,

This is a response to the CEC committee meeting coming up about compensation meeting.

I feel overall well compensated with my job as a state nurse. However, it is important to stay competitive to retain nurses and gather interest. We cannot keep nurses when they won't tolerate our low staffing. We had a great nurse start, and the first day off orientation he was expected to cover three licensed staff positions, he quit on the spot. This is dangerous for staff and patients. We need to be desirable to those looking for stable income with great benefits.

It should also be considered that we must stay competitive with inflation. The benefit when I started here almost 10 years ago was that you made enough vs inflation that you could retire from the state with out having a second job. It was worth people staying long term full time. However, now with inflation many are looking for higher paid nursing jobs. I also don't even consider over time most of the time, why pick up overtime to help with understaffing when it just costs me more money in childcare?

We also need to consider that the nurses with direct patient care are often at risk for injury due to the population we are caring for.

Thanks,

[Redacted signature block]

Hello Christine,

At State Hospital North we have struggled in attracting and in retaining both nurses and psychiatric technicians to the point of being severely understaffed. This has lead to staff burnout, frequent call-offs, new employees only working a week or a few days and then quitting and several potential employees declining our positions for more lucrative employment elsewhere. SHN is not even close to being competitive in wages in the nursing field. In this economy people are just unwilling to take a huge cut in pay for the promise of a nice benefit package. This methodology is just not working. SHN's current state of understaffing is both frightening and dangerous. How can we provide Idaho's most vulnerable population with adequate care when we are so severely understaffed? Please. Please raise wages to a competitive level. Thank you,

Respectfully,

[Redacted signature block]

CEC Committee,

Thank you for allowing us State Workers to have a chance to comment on the proposed changes to Employee Compensation recommendations. After reading through your proposal I was encouraged by your insight and data collection. I appreciate your awareness into how much Idaho State workers sacrifice compared to our private sector peers in order to serve the great people of the State of Idaho. As a nurse working at the State hospital it has been discouraging over the years seeing qualified nurses leaving for better pay and compensation. I hope that this change will attract more quality candidates to consider working for the State of Idaho with us at the State Hospitals, or maybe to choose nursing as a career.

With that commentary of the proposal out of the way, I wanted to discuss and testify on how restrictions in human resources policies affects the ability for us to run a safe and therapeutic hospital. As a twenty-four hour a day, seven day a week facility, caring for the mentally ill in Idaho, State Hospital South, and the other State hospitals, have unique personnel challenges that affect us and our staffing. We don't have busy seasons, periods of being open and closed like state parks, or the ability to close down services, like lines in a call center. This is important as more than half our workforce is made up of part time health care workers. Most are psychiatric techs, that handle psychiatric patients, with grace and skill, with potential threats to their own safety. It takes time to train and teach the skills necessary to become effective at patient interactions, deescalating from crisis situations, building relationships with patients, and giving great care to those in need. The state expects most temp workers to work around 24 – 28 hours per week, and caps the hours a worker can work in a year. However as a 24/7 facility these part time workers are often working full time hours year round to cover vacations, flu/COVID outbreaks among staff, and other staffing emergencies. I've seen great workers run out of their yearly hours in 5 -6 months due to the demand put on them to be available to cover for people who are sick. This leave us with holes at the facility and unsafe conditions if we don't have enough staff to cover. It also costs the state more money to rehire for these positions and get them trained to be proficient. Some of our techs switch between jobs in the community

for half the year and the state waiting for their hours to replenish. This frustrates our local small town, as they often don't know if a worker will stay long term or leave when their hours reset at the state. A fix that many staff here at the hospitals have is to exempt the part time employees at the state hospitals from these hour caps to help us retain them and contribute to patient safety.

My other HR policy concern is the requirement to wait until positions are vacant to start the recruitment process. As noted above, we need a fixed amount of staff to safely run our hospitals. We will have staff who put in their notices of separation, but due to the restrictions, our managers are unable to start looking for replacement staff until after the staff leave. They are required to submit a request to replace positions and the justification from state human resources. In the private setting, hospital human resource departments start looking for replacements right away to ensure safe staffing. However, we have to deal with gaps in our schedules due to having to wait weeks after a retiring, resigning, or employee without hours has there last day to begin the search for replacement workers. An example I saw was a licensed practical nurse, giving four months' notice that she would be retiring. Everyone know it was coming long before that as well. For four months our managers and in hospital HR were unable to look for a replacement for that position. It was a night shift spot and would be difficult to find someone willing to work it in a short amount of time as well. However they could not put in the request to reopen the position until the week after she had left for retirement. It then took 2 months to find a replacement night shift LPN, leaving other staff to have to do expensive overtime to fill in. To solve this, I would propose allowing the hospitals under state direction to have the ability to recruit and hire similar to private institutions.

I again appreciate your time, and hope that you can contribute to the State Hospitals and Dept of Health and Welfare safely caring for Idaho's most vulnerable.



State Hospital South

Dear CEC Committee,

- I am an RN at State Hospital South. I have an extensive background. I have worked med-surge, ICU, Dialysis and Psych. I have been paid the lowest wages working for State Hospital South. My husband is living in and working in Alaska. The pay for a Psych Nurse there is \$101,000.
- **Psych RN**

Salary range: \$90,000-\$123,500 per year

The majority of Psych RN salaries across the United States currently range between \$90,000 (25th percentile) and \$123,500 (75th percentile) annually. This moderate range of salaries suggests pay in this role will be consistent, regardless skill level, location and years of experience, though some advancement is possible. Based on recent job postings on ZipRecruiter, the Psych RN job market in the United States is moderately active, with several companies hiring.

The average salary for a Psychiatric Nurse is **\$81.72 per hour** in Boise, ID.

Wyoming psych nurse salary, \$85,420, according to [ZipRecruiter](#) as of February 2022, followed by Massachusetts, at \$81,290, Montana, at \$80,490, Arizona, at \$79,660, and Hawaii, at \$79,590.

I feel we are working with a dangerous population and at any time, anyone could be hurt, we have little flexibility with our schedules and there is not much of a chance for upward movement.

Not only Nurses need raises to be competitive but psych techs and LPN's need raises just to keep up with inflation and cost of living. We need more funding for buildings, Syringa needs money to open it's two other wings. There is no housing available to the elderly who have mental illness. It can take weeks to months to find skilled nursing for many of our patients.

In closing, I would like each of you to come and tour our facility and I can show you what you need to make informed decisions.

Thanks,



Good Morning,

It is great to hear that we as employees have an opportunity to give and provide our opinion as to having our compensation increase. This does provided one to be able to point out something as the cost of living is in going up not only in our great State but in other . Even if it is a house hold of two things tend to get an little bit hard at time and we need to dip into our saving just to make sure we can stay afloat. That being said it is also hard for a single house hold. So to see an increase in our pay would make things somewhat less stressful.

Thank you

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Division of Welfare/Self Reliance Customer Service Center

[REDACTED]

MyBenefits@dhw.idaho.gov

www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov

Hello,

I am writing regarding the proposed raise and why the department of DHW would be worthy of a 4.5 percent raise. In Idaho, the average cost of living per person is around \$3400.00 per month. Housing has increased over the last few years. The last two years in a row my landlord has raised our rent by 200.00/month. I anticipate he will do this again this year when it is time to renew the lease. For a household of two I spend \$400.00 per month on groceries and that is just the staples, we are lucky enough to be able to buy meat in bulk from a relative, not everyone has that luxury. If I had to buy beef our groceries would exceed \$600.00/month considering inflation. We are renters because we cannot justify purchasing a house with a 30-year mortgage with the interest rates the way they are. A year ago, we were in the same predicament with the grocery prices being so high. I take advantage of level pay for our gas and electricity. If these utilities did not offer this option, we would be hard pressed to pay these bills.

Many people in the department I work for work overtime just to get by. Please consider giving these people that work tirelessly to serve our community to ensure they are getting the resources they need to survive a raise. They come to work with a positive attitude and willingness and eagerness to get the job done and they deserve to be rewarded for their efforts.

Thank you for taking my testimony into consideration.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Division of Welfare | Self-Reliance Customer Service Center

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
mybenefits@dhw.idaho.gov

Good morning,

I appreciate the opportunity to provide to provide input regarding compensation. With discussions surrounding telework policy revision, I think it is important to consider where one works as important as how much one earns. Research has demonstrated that employees are more productive when given the opportunity to telework. However, it is also important to understand the other benefits of telework. Employees are able to enjoy a higher level of work-life balance. Less time is spent on the road in commute traffic which equates to less cost for fuel, vehicle wear and tear and results in more available time to spend with family. We all are aware that the government pay scale is well below the private market pay scale; however, the public sector does not require most employees to work beyond 40-45 hours per week. Folks attracted to the public sector jobs do so because of the desire to help others and not for the compensation. Should remote work (Telework) significantly change, than I suspect many of us will return to the private sector where flexibility to work from home is available and wages are better.

I have worked as exempt with hybrid or fully remote options since 2010 as a manager, director and consultant. I have found that mid-level and high-level performing employees do quite well remote work situations. A small percentage wage increase will not incentivize people to stay with return to office mandates for team members that do not directly serve Idahoans in an in-person setting.

Thank you for considering this perspective,

[REDACTED]
[Supporting the productivity and wellbeing of remote workers - PMC \(nih.gov\)](#)

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Division of Public Health
Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

Christine,

I am submitting a comment to you about compensation. I am new to the State system here at DHW. I find that working some 50- and 60-hour week due to case loads is a lot of hours, but this is because we are still

short staffed in the child and family division. The work is tough, and I find that taking work home with me is the only way to get case notes completed. I currently have over 100 hours of comp time on the books but taking time off is tough because when you return from a long weekend or mini vacation, your work has fallen behind and you find that your case load is behind again. I think it would be nice to have a raise, but I also feel that paying for comp time, even only half of it should be an option so that we can afford the little extra things when we do take a day off.

Respectfully,

[REDACTED]

Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

Child and Family Services Reg. 3

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Good morning,

I am a Grants/Contracts Officer for the Dept of Health and Welfare, and have worked for the Dept since 2015. I was pleased to see the 4.5% CEC recommendation, but would like to point out that it falls well below the inflation rate for the past two years. This last year was my highest earning year to date, and I am still struggling to pay for necessities for my family. Many Idahoans are in the same position – with food prices rising 10% in 2022 it feels like we're always slipping behind.

Now we are faced with a change in the state telework policy, which will make retaining existing employees and attracting new ones even more difficult. My current paycheck will not stretch far enough to cover childcare needed if I have to commute back to the office.

I was surprised to see that 52% of state workers are eligible to retire in the next 5 years.

Thank you for advocating on our behalf – we need the largest raises possible in order to maintain the existing workforce and attract new hires. This is a critical issue with the massive employee overturn anticipated in the next 5 years.

12-month percent change in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers, selected items, not seasonally adjusted

Categories	Dec 2018 to Dec 2019	Dec 2019 to Dec 2020	Dec 2020 to Dec 2021	Dec 2021 to Dec 2022
All items	2.3%	1.4%	7.0%	6.5%
Food	1.8	3.9	6.3	10.4
Food at home	0.7	3.9	6.5	11.8

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Contracting and Procurement Services

Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

[REDACTED]

Dear Christine,

I work in Child Protection and am a Safety Assessor, which means I am the first person going out to see the family and determine safety of the child. It may not seem to people who are not in the position that it is a somewhat dangerous job especially in today's world. We are subjected daily to methamphetamine, fentanyl and various other drugs. We never know if the next door we knock on has a gun behind it or if we could be killed that day or not. We go in a moment's notice and sometimes we work with no lunch and get back to the office at midnight. It is dark and there are no security guards waiting to ensure our safety from angry families.

Some of our workers are Hispanic and translate for us because utilizing the translation line takes about 3 times longer to complete an assessment and sometimes the clients still don't understand. Many of the families we work with now don't speak languages the translation lines even have or they only have one and they don't work all the time so we go out and if we can't get someone on the line we go back another time. This takes time away from our ability to complete assessments in a timely manner. This isn't fair to the families we serve. Workers that go the extra mile to help out the team should get paid more for translating even if it was only when they did as they would respect that way more than just being told to do it.

Workers get frustrated due to a lack of support because case loads are too high and they quit because they can make better money elsewhere and not be subjected to long hours and dangerous situations. Don't get me wrong, benefits are a big part especially for older workers such as myself because as I get closer to retirement my health hasn't been as good, but younger kids don't utilize it as much so those benefits don't mean as much to them. They like the check because they are not looking ahead and because of that we lose them to the hospital that will pay them \$5 to \$7 more an hour. In the bigger scheme of things a \$1.50 raise doesn't mean much to them when they can walk out the door and start somewhere else for \$5 more.

Anyway we work difficult hours and it is sad to remove kids which makes burn out so much higher. Possibly if pay was better we could retain staff more often and wouldn't lose them to better paying jobs. Hopefully legislators can start to understand what a difficult and high burn out job this is and try to reward workers accordingly. Thanks for listening,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Thank you for accepting this written testimony. This testimony is for me as a state employee; I do not represent my agency. I am a proud state employee working in Public Health and have been with the state for 6 years now. I enjoy my work and feel as though it contributes greatly to the health of our citizens, however with increasing costs for just about everything, continuing to work for a state agency becomes more difficult. Inflation is making it impossible to keep the same quality of life we had just a year ago. The pace of growth in Idaho is difficult for many workers, but state workers are suffering with stagnant wages, that just don't keep up with costs. The state loses great employees, who want to work for the public but have to leave because they simply can't afford to work for the state anymore.

I manage two incredible employees who have been with the state for over 5 years, they are high performers with a great amount of institutional knowledge. Both are single moms and the rent on their apartments continues to increase. They love this work but have to make hard decisions regarding if they can afford to work for the state anymore. The reality of not being able to afford to work somewhere you love is not unique, and many employees are facing this same reality.

I ask that you please accept the recommendation of the CEC report and approve a merit increase of 4.5% to show the dedicated public servants that the work they do is important and appreciated. If wages are not significantly increased, we will lose great people and the cost to hire and train new employees is far greater than increasing wages.

Thank you for your consideration on this extremely important topic.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

CEC Committee:

I have only been employed with the State of Idaho, Bureau of Facility Standards for a short time and can already see the strain and difficulty my department has on acquiring and retaining qualified candidates for employment. The Bureau provides an important function with enforcing compliance in Idaho health care facilities. Without these dedicated employees, the safety and well-being of patient's individual rights would be greatly affected. These dedicated employees need to be valued and paid a competitive wage for their work. There are several employees in my department who are recent new hires (with less than a year being employed with the State), meaning employee turn-over rate is extremely high, which I believe is due to the low pay. It is difficult to effectively do our job when we are understaffed and are constantly training new employees due to high turnover. A competitive wage would help to retain valuable staff.


The cost for goods including food, rent, gas and services has increased steadily year after year, but the wages people make don't seem to increase at the same rate making it difficult to support a family. I believe offering a competitive wage would help to attract and retain talented employees. Please invest in and provide the State employees with competitive salaries.

Thank you for your time in reviewing the need to raise compensation and wages for Idaho State Employees.


Technical Records Specialist 2

Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

Division of Licensing & Certification

Bureau of Facility Standards


Good Morning,

I have writing in regards to an email that was sent to us about Change in Employee Compensation (CEC) Committee.

I wanted to express my recommendation for the telecommuters who have proven to be success to continue to work from home. I have successfully worked in a telecommuting compacity since 2005 and continue to telecommute today. That is the only reason I took my current position at DHW. It is a proven work life balance for many employees. With the low wages and the rising prices of everything else, I will not be returning to the office if required.

Please make telecommuting a policy for state employees. I certainly do not want to look for another job in 2024 and that is what I will be doing if required to come back in the office.

Thank you so much for your consideration,

[REDACTED]
Self-Reliance Specialist
Idaho Department of Health & Welfare

[REDACTED]
mybenefits@dhw.idaho.gov

Good morning,

This is my written testimony to the Change in Employee Compensation (CEC) Committee about the state's personnel system and employee compensation.

Firstly, 4.5% is not enough considering inflation has continually gone up (the last annual percentage being 3.1% as of November 2023). Also, 4.5% isn't even what everyone will be getting as it's the top amount. More than likely, most people will be getting around 3%. As a single female who currently has an entire paycheck and a half go to necessities (rent, utilities, insurance, and groceries), I know whatever percent I get will not match what I need. My rent alone goes up 3-9% each year.

Secondly, we are now being told we may back to go back into the office. As someone who applied for my current job because the job posting said telework full time, being forced back into the office is essentially a pay cut. I have successfully excelled at telecommuting for almost a year. But I will now have to pay for gas to get to work and pay for parking at the office, which means I have to pay money to be forced into the office. Unless we will be compensated for parking, which I doubt, considering there is limited paid parking on the property. More than likely, most people will have to pay for meter parking, or a parking garage away from the office. I also assume the funds going into bringing people into the office will be coming out of funds that could better be used elsewhere, like our raises or getting agencies properly staffed.

Which leads me into my next point, we are already understaffed so I am doing the job of multiple people. Department of Health and Welfare Medicaid division alone asked for many more positions, I believe 12 positions, and 4 would be for my team alone. Getting properly compensated for the work I am doing only seems logical to me.

Please take all of these into account as I know I am not the only who has these concerns.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

Contract Monitor

Bureau of Care Management

Division of Medicaid

Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

As a Designated Examiner and lead worker I have an opportunity to hear comments and observe staff performance. I can be challenging at times encouraging staff to “hang,” in there as they are being offered other employment opportunities in the community; especially statewide DHW implementation begin to take place. I can only speak for those who I work closely with and can state without a doubt that clinicians are struggling with their life choices and future prospects. Incentives such as the bonuses given out have kept many clinicians in place. However, monetary compensation speaks volumes and implementing the CEC in a fair and consistent manner is key; employees want to be compensated and recognized for the work they do. While some go above and beyond there are others are “quiet quitting,” referring to employees who put no more effort into their jobs than necessary. This appears to have become a reality.

I believe it is also important to note how many clinicians have second and third employers to make ends meet. We all know it is a struggle out there but unfortunately those who are working extra are at a higher risk of burning out seeking employment in the private sector. Clinicians and beyond want to feel valued and pay increases along with bonuses contribute those committing to the work we do and staying with the DHW.

Thank you for our time, [REDACTED], LCSW

CEC Committee –

Thank you for inviting state employee testimony regarding the state’s personnel system and employee compensation. I believe it’s imperative for decision makers to know something, from employees’ perspective, about the personnel related decisions that affect the day-to-day lives of the many talented, knowledgeable, and dedicated state employees who keep state agencies functioning day to day in service of all Idahoans.

As you are well aware after seeing decades of employee compensation reports identifying the same issue over and over again - state employee compensation lags sorely behind private industry and the legislature's undersized responses to correct that have kept us lagging. Compensation and benefits remain at the top of the list of issues that hamstringing effective state agency recruitment and retention efforts. This results in real dollar loss and significant knowledge loss for the state. I reiterate – employee compensation and benefits remains a considerable and concerning issue. The real expense of failing to keep pace with private sector pay and benefits costs the state money and loss of intellectual and historical programmatic administrative knowledge that keeps programs in an endless and frustrating one-step-forward two-steps-back human resources conundrum. One big difference maker in the past couple of years has been the benefit of offering remote work. We have seen the benefit of offering full remote work schedules first hand and in multiple ways. First, remote work is helping us retain staff with many years of knowledge. Our program was able to retain two employees (for 2 and 3 years respectively) who otherwise would have retired. This was an invaluable retention tool for our program. In addition, remote work has resulted in reduced sick call outs and thus, improved productivity and continuity of operations. Staff who would have missed work due to illness and concern for potentially spreading illness in an in-person setting were able to keep up with work and miss fewer total hours. Further, our program has been able to fill open positions and recruit the best possible candidates because we were able to offer remote work. Twenty five percent of our program staff were recruited from outside of the Boise area; all of those recruits came with many years of invaluable program specific experience having provided direct services in regions around the state. These are staff that would not have had the opportunity to serve at the state agency level without the remote work benefit.

As a program supervisor, I know the remote work option has directly benefited the operations unit that I oversee. Without this option I would not have been able to make the same kind of hire 18 months ago that brought in a dedicated, knowledgeable employee who was able to hit the ground running based on her extensive front line experience working for the program outside of the Boise area. This saved the program time and money. This employee could make more working elsewhere. She took the position, despite lower than average pay, because she could work from home. Many of us also recognize driving less means a reduction in pollution thus an improvement in air quality; something that should be on everyone's minds but is clearly visible in the Boise – not just during winter inversions but all year long. The dirty smog layer lingering over downtown has lessened as more folks have been able to work from home. Cleaner air benefits all of us.

I'm aware the solicitation of comments was likely intended to be related to compensation in terms of pay and traditional benefits. I cannot emphasize enough how much the option for full remote work is a real, tangible benefit for employees. It is also a real benefit to state programs that cannot be overstated and should not be overlooked in the evaluation of the total compensation package. There is real dollar value connected to the option for full remote work and employees recognize and appreciate the real dollar value of this benefit. It keeps a significant amount of an employee's pay in their pockets. Money saved by not having to drive into an office – less spent on fuel and less spent on vehicle maintenance to name just one of many – is a real cost savings for staff and something we see as part of the state employee benefit package. We recognize not all positions are conducive to remote work but many are; and for employees in those positions, removing the remote work option is a loss of total benefits. State employees have gone above and beyond in service to all Idahoans these past few years. Removing the remote work benefit would be a slap in the face after many of us have worked even more hours from home, missed less work, and increased our productivity; not the other way around.

I encourage the committee to take real steps to shrink the public/private pay gap, including methods to ensure staff with experience and high performance ratings are able to earn more than new hires in the same roles. Experience and performance should count for something. This is a real motivation and morale killer for staff. A half-measured approach and continuously undercutting the recommendations in the CEC reports year after year keeps us behind. As part of the total compensation package, I urge the committee to keep the remote work benefit fully intact. It has been an invaluable benefit that saves the state money in numerous ways. Before any cuts to remote work are made arbitrarily, I urge the committee to fully evaluate the cost savings associated with remote work to avoid unintended and costly consequences of changing the state's remote work policy.

Thank you.

[REDACTED]

Vendor Manager

Idaho WIC Program

Department of Health & Welfare

Division of Public Health

450 W State St, 1st Floor (PO Box 83720) Boise, ID 83720

[REDACTED]

It is reasonable, for state federal employees to receive CEC pay increase. The state had an adjustment in the Federal Poverty guidelines for our programs this year due to this economy. This just shows that we, state federal employees can benefit as well, given the chance to get CEC/increase in compensation.

Thank you!

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Good Morning

I am writing in response to request for comment on employee compensation. I am a new employee but I did have to take a significant pay cut to come and work for the state and love the work but it certainly makes paying bills very difficult especially as Idaho housing costs continue to rise. I think it would be easier to balance household expenses if there was an increase in salary with added flexibility of continuing to allow employees to work some at work perhaps not the whole week but a few days a week.

Thank you,

[REDACTED], LMSW, MPH
Health Facility Surveyor, Acute and Continuing Care
[Bureau of Facility Standards](#)

To the CEC Committee;

Housing costs in much of Idaho have changed enormously. The cost of living has increased across the board. I've been impacted. I'm an employee of the state Idaho in the Division of Public Health for the Suicide Prevention Program.

I value working for the state. It's an honor to serve Idahoans through my program. I also have long term retirement goals that have been impacted because I don't have the resources to save extra now.

I urge the members of this committee to be fair and generous in recognizing the dedication state employees give to their programs and to Idahoans. State employees are constantly creating with their leadership, ways to uplift the lives of Idahoans who are most at risk with the least resource commitment possible. It's a long game of strategy that needs high functioning, adequately compensated employees.

Please adopt the recommendations of the FY25 Change in Employee Compensation and Benefits Report. Fair and adequate compensation goes a long way in sustaining a workforce who can deliver the long game.

With appreciation for your consideration,

[REDACTED]
Program Specialist, Suicide Prevention Program

Division of Public Health

Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear CEC Committee,

I am writing to address the critical matter of employee compensation, specifically focusing on the dedicated early intervention therapists within our state's personnel system. These therapists include speech language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and developmental specialists. As a speech language pathologist, I have witnessed firsthand the invaluable contributions of these professionals in enhancing the well-being of our community.

Early intervention therapists play a pivotal role in the lives of individuals who require specialized care and support. Our commitment to fostering positive outcomes for those in need is commendable, but it is essential that you recognize and adequately reward our efforts.

I urge the committee to consider a substantial increase in pay for early intervention therapists. This adjustment not only acknowledges the specialized skills and expertise we bring to our roles but also ensures that we are fairly compensated for the vital services we provide.

Furthermore, I propose an enhancement in vacation time accrual for these therapists. Adequate time off is crucial for maintaining our overall well-being, reducing burnout, and ultimately improving the quality of care we deliver. By offering a more competitive vacation package, you not only demonstrate your commitment to the welfare of your workforce but also position yourselves as an employer of choice in the competitive landscape.

Investing in the compensation and well-being of early intervention therapists is an investment in the overall success of our community. It is an opportunity for our state to lead by example and foster a work environment that attracts and retains top-tier talent dedicated to making a positive impact.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am confident that by prioritizing fair compensation and improved benefits for early intervention therapists, you can create a more sustainable and fulfilling work environment, ultimately benefiting both the employees and the communities we serve.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Speech Language Pathologist

Region 3

Idaho Infant Toddler Program

Idaho Department of Health & Welfare

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Good Morning Christine,

Prior to my knowledge about the committee, I was writing a paper in-regard to my wage. Being that I new to the state I cannot say much to the wages throughout the state. What I can say is that there is a big difference between the top of my administration and myself. I don't know if this is what you are looking for or not but please feel free to read the attached.

December 07, 2023

I would like to take a moment to speak about my hourly wage. When I first received my hourly wage while in Nebraska, I thought that the rate of \$27.75 was decent for a starting wage. It wasn't until my arrival and several months into my tenure that I discovered this was not the case.

Recently some of my co-workers within the organization informed me that my wage was low for the work I do. When I asked them to clarify they informed me that they saw my wage on Transparent Idaho, and I was one of the lowest paid individuals within the organization.

Instead of taking their word for it I decided to conduct my own research through Transparent Idaho. The first thing I noticed was that Kristie Bartz was making \$26.96 an hour as an Administrative Assistant, which was \$0.79 less than my salary. To find out our wages were so close even though I have three degrees and several years of supervisory/procurement experience was somewhat shocking. Since her promotion, her wage has increased to \$31.00 an hour which is almost four dollars per hour more than mine. Moreover, I noticed that there were other individuals that are classified as a higher pay grade even though their workload does not support it. I have found some of those forementioned people sleeping on the job site while passing out orders/supplies.

Furthermore, I researched the wages of our most frequent purchasers from other agencies. Out of the fourteen agencies I researched, one of which is ours, I found that only four people are listed as purchasers/buyers. As for the other ten individuals, they are classified as Project Manager, Project Coordinator, Business Analyst and Administrative Assistant to name a few. The avg. salary of those for those ten people is \$35.67. The staff that are listed as buyers/purchasers have an avg salary of \$29.58. As it stands now my salary is below that avg. Further research revealed that the city of Meridian is paying their purchaser/buyers \$38.00 an hour.

If you recall there was a purchase order recently submitted for a contract web designer, this PO was for \$250,000 is memory serves me correct. As a previous contract worker, I understand that the listed

amount goes to the contractor's corporation as well as the employee; the employee will get most of that wage.

In closing, I am sure you can understand why I am displeased with my current wage; I hope at some point this can be rectified.



[REDACTED]
Sr. Purchaser
11331 W Chinden Blvd, Suite 201B
Boise ID 83714
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Christine Otto,

My name is [REDACTED]. I work for the Department of Health and Welfare. I have been established at the State of Idaho for the last 36 months, as the Maintenance Supervisor. During my duration working for the state, I have had multiple Maintenance Craftsman Sr. positions vacant. This issue has been ongoing before my arrival. I get very little interest in applicants, and when I do get applicants, they are interested in more money than we can offer. The state benefits are good, but the younger generation wants more money for their long-term investments. At the end of the day, the wage is what will interest applicants over benefits because money is what everyone is working for.

I have a crew of 5 (including myself), with two positions filled, two vacant, and myself. One of my current employees is going to retire in March. This will leave me and one Maintenance Craftsman SR. to pick up the slack for the other three vacant positions. I recommend that the state increase the wage for all positions before vacant positions become the new normal and employees seek employment elsewhere because of burnout. The Maintenance Craftsman Sr. positions are allowed to be paid for over time. I am a Supervisor, that does not get paid for overtime. It does no good for me and the crew to work overtime because we can not get rid of the time we already have. (we are allowed to take time off, but the time we do take off is earned back within one month. We share an on-call rotation I am included in this on-call rotation).

With two vacant positions and will lose another Maintenance employee in the next two months (due to retirement), As the Supervisor of Maintenance, I will be on-call three weeks at a time. While the only Maintenance Craftsman SR. will do one week of on-call, I don't want to burn out my last employee. Supervisors should be allowed to be paid for overtime and on-call hours. The non-classified position have the option to get paid out for on-call and overtime, so should the Classified positions because it is the same

work duty. (this is only if the operating budget for the Hospital will allow non-classified positions to be paid. There are so many vacant positions, this is why paid overtime and on-call are allowed). This trend of employees leaving the workforce, at the State of Idaho, can be stopped. Increasing wages will combat vacant positions.

In the CEC recommendation Study,

Page 15 of the study, "average base salaries at the State fall 27% behind the private sector and 22.7% behind the public sector market. On average, base salaries at the state are 24.9% behind the combined market. Idaho is trailing the market in nearly all the pay grades, however, lower pay grades are closer aligned (12-28% behind), where higher pay grades are behind by an average of 30%".

(page 118) 510 people have left the Department of Health and Welfare. That is 17%

Page 119 Maintenance Craftsman has a turnover rate of 71.8%.

I highly recommend that the State of Idaho give current employees a significant raise, to combat the trend of seeking employment elsewhere. The State of Idaho is interested in career employees, then the State of Idaho needs to pay career wages... If wages can't be adjusted, then benefits need to go back to the good days, when benefits were not a cost to the employee and deductibles were very little... All pay grades need to be adjusted to keep up with today's job markets for current employees and interest future employees to come to work for the State of Idaho. If this trend continues, I am afraid that solid employees will seek employment elsewhere. Please correct this issue now before it is too late! Don't lose good employees, then correct wages.

Thank you for your time.

[REDACTED]

Maintenance Supervisor, State Hospital North

300 Hospital Drive Orofino, Idaho 83544

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear CEC Committee,

I hope this letter finds you well. As a newly returning employee of the State of Idaho, I appreciate the opportunity to share my perspective on the matter of employee compensation before the esteemed Change in Employee Compensation Committee.

I am writing to express my strong support for an increase in employee wages within the State of Idaho. I believe that such an adjustment is not only a matter of fairness and equity but also a crucial step in recognizing the hard work, dedication, and contributions of the state workforce.

As a part of the Snake River quagga muscle response team, I have witnessed firsthand the unwavering commitment of my colleagues. Despite facing various challenges and responsibilities, employees consistently go above and beyond to ensure the effective functioning of our state institutions. Their dedication is the backbone of our collective success, and it deserves to be acknowledged and rewarded.

Competitive and fair compensation is not just a monetary acknowledgment of the value each employee brings to their role; it is an investment in the overall morale, motivation, and productivity of the workforce. Adequate compensation is not only a tool for attracting top talent but also a means to retain experienced and skilled individuals who form the bedrock of our state services.

Furthermore, enhancing employee compensation aligns with the state's commitment to creating a positive and inclusive work environment. It sends a powerful message that the State of Idaho values its employees and is committed to fostering a culture of respect and appreciation.

I understand the budgetary considerations that the committee must weigh, and I am confident that the committee will carefully deliberate on this matter. However, I urge you to consider the long-term benefits of investing in our state employees, who play an instrumental role in shaping the future of Idaho.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am optimistic that the Change in Employee Compensation Committee will take bold steps towards ensuring that the hardworking men and women of the State of Idaho receive the recognition and compensation they deserve.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Invasive Species Program Specialist
Idaho State Department of Agriculture

[REDACTED]

Dear Employee Compensation Committee,

First of all, I would like to express my appreciation for extending an invitation for us to express our thoughts on the topic of the state's compensation. As you no doubt are aware, the cost of living in Idaho has gone up considerably, making it more and more difficult to make ends meet on the basic needs in life. I have worked for the state of Idaho for over twenty years most of which has been in a part-time capacity, hence the reason it's not reflected in years on my longevity. Nevertheless my commitment to the State of Idaho has been proven in my loyalty and dedication to provide quality customer service and team work within the program I work under.

In my current department there have been some turn over and have been short staffed, in my opinion, because of low compensation and people not applying for open positions, mostly in my opinion due to the low compensation provided by the state. Those of us that have stayed have had to take on extra work load without it being compensated. I truly feel that the state of Idaho could improve on the aspect of compensating employee loyalty and award them for their dedication and perseverance.

One thing that has bothered me for some time now is how the State of Idaho does not show value or compensation for employees that speak a second language that is commonly used on a daily basis in a lot of cases. I myself speak, read and write Spanish and am used often in this capacity with no extra pay for this service. I know first- hand that translation consumes more time and is a skill that is widely used in the region where I work.

As an employee that migrated to this country and have parent's who's English is not their first language can sympathize with client's that are in need of someone that can translate for them. Although I'm happy to be able to help out in this capacity, it doesn't lessen the fact that I feel employees who have and use this skill should therefore be paid extra and not just viewed as an "added" asset.

I want to thank you again for allowing us to give feedback on this very important topic that affects our everyday life. I also appreciate you taking the time to read my opinion and thoughts on the matter.

Thank You,

[REDACTED]

Child Welfare-Tech Records Spec1

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

December 26, 2023

[REDACTED]

Dear CEC Committee,

I want to thank you for the opportunity to write this letter today regarding the Change in Employee Compensation (CEC) for the coming year's fiscal year. I have worked with the ISDA for six years with the

Organic Program, with my current position as manager based out of Boise. As we have all witnessed, there is an influx of new occupants to the great state of Idaho. With this influx, housing and rent prices throughout our state have increased dramatically. I love working for the state in my position, but with increasing prices, it is placing added stress on my family and I to meet these rising costs. Inflation is also greatly impacting visits to our local grocery store, and we have been forced to tighten our budget as a result.

In my time working for the state, I know the hard work that my peers and I put into regulating and keeping the state of Idaho moving forward. We need to provide for our state workers and ensure that we are keeping salaries in line with the current cost of living. This is also essential in employee retention. I have witnessed too many great employees leave their jobs with the state due to salary differences in the private sector, and to curb this the state needs salaries that are competitive with private industry.

I hope that with these facts in mind, that the CEC committee will consider the importance of a CEC increase especially with current economic conditions in the state of Idaho.

Warm regards,

[REDACTED]

Organic Program Manager
Organic Program Manager

Idaho State Department of Agriculture

P.O. Box 7249 | Boise, ID 83707

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

To the Legislative Committee and Assembly

I have served the Great State of Idaho for the past 13 years. I served 11 years as a Senior Agricultural Investigator and now serve as a Program Manager. As a Program Manager, I oversee the day-to-day Management of multiple Programs and of up to seven (7) Specialists and Investigators. As a Program Manager I am finding it difficult to hire qualified and competent people to fill Agency Vacancies. I understand the need to not ultimately compete with private industry, but I also believe that we should be hiring individuals that have an understanding of the needs of our Great State and of its citizens. We as servants of the Citizens of Idaho need to have an understanding and have ties to the roots and the legacies of this land and its people. Currently I am struggling to find qualified people that share those understandings. We as an agency and as a state need to offer a sustainable wage that encourages our residents to want to work with the State. We also need to offer wages and compensation that encourages the retention of our experienced employees. As a Manager I see far too many of our experienced employees moving to other Agencies in Bordering states and to Federal Agencies. As an employee of the State, I do see the positive of our long-term benefit packages, the main issue is that the newer employees cannot afford to stay with us long enough to not realize those benefits.

[REDACTED]

To whom it may concern,

We have been given the chance as state employees to provide feedback to your committee in regards to CEC. We know that compensation is something that is looked at every year. However, there are a couple of things that I think could help attract more great state employees.

First - Increased pay for industry-recognized certifications. Our team of network engineers is required to work on many different technologies on a day-to-day basis. One way to learn is through on-the-job training. The other is to study these complicated subjects. However, as we are usually busy at work, that leaves only personal time to learn these new technologies or to become proficient in them. Many state employees do not see the benefit of earning certifications, there is no incentive to grow knowledge and constantly learn new things. Some private sector employers provide time off for training, much like the state does, that helps and is greatly appreciated. However, there is a huge difference between taking a class and studying the material to master it, to the point of paying money to take an industry certification. I know some private sector employers provide pay compensation for certifications. An example would be \$.50 - \$1 for an associate-level cert (Cisco Certified Network Associate - CCNA, Juniper Networks Certified Internet Associate - JNCIA) , or \$1.5 to \$2 for a Professional level certification (Cisco Certified Network Professional - CCNP, Juniper Networks Certified Internet Professional - JNCIP) I think this would help attract better-qualified state employees and reward the state employees who are studying on their own time to become better at their Jobs.

Second - College tuition for employees and their families. Currently, as far as I know, only employees of the state colleges get the benefits of reduced college tuition. I think a measurable benefit you could provide for all state employees would be to offer the same level of college tuition benefit to all state employees and their families. I came from the private sector 4 years ago, if there was a benefit like that being offered to all state employees, it would make it easier to justify taking a pay cut from the private sector to come and work for the state.

Third - On-Call reimbursement. The current state statute leaves a lot of autonomy to the agencies on how to do this. This has created a huge gap. The statute says you must pay an employee a minimum of 4 hours per on-call rotation, but then you allowed agencies to determine what an on-call rotation is defined as.

Some agencies decided an On-call rotation was defined as Monday - to - Monday, so that agency employee earns 4 hours of OCE (on-call earned) for being available 24/7 for 7

days, however, if they get called out to restore services, those hours go against the OCE time code, so if you get called out, you actually lose pay.

Another agency has defined an on-call rotation as 12 hours, so they earn 4 hours OCE on Monday, Tuesday...etc (4+4+4+4+4) and then double on Saturday (4+4) and Sunday (4+4) for a total of 36 hours OCE for the Monday - to - Monday rotation. If they get called out to restore services, those hours go against the OCE time code.

32 hours of pay discrepancy from agency to agency is huge. For an example, in the unionized private sector where I came from, you earned \$25-40 a day, for carrying the on-call phone, to compensate you for being available 24/7 (no traveling, no drinking, being able to respond in a timely manner) and then you earned a minimum of 2 hours if you got called out, and earned an hour for every hour you worked. I have talked to other team members who came from tech companies like Intel, and their on-call policy was better than any I have described here.

Also, some of our teams are 10 people, only requiring you to be on-call every 10 weeks, the team I am on is 3 people, requiring us to be on call every 3 weeks. That is every third week I can't go anywhere, or do much of anything, (go to a restaurant, see a movie in a theater, etc) and I earn a whole 4 hours of OCE for that being available 24/7.

I hope you have the time to discuss these ideas, as I believe it will make being an employee at the state an even better experience.

Thanks,



[Redacted]
Network Engineer III
11331 W Chinden Blvd, Suite 201B
Boise ID 83714
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]

Hello,

I appreciate the opportunity to provide written testimony to the CEC Committee about the state's personnel system and employee compensation. First, I am very grateful for the opportunity to work for the great State of Idaho and to receive the associated benefits. I think the benefits package is a significant incentive for employees and I would encourage continued support and funding. Next, I appreciate the flexibility provided by my current assignment. The ability to maximize my time, efforts, and resources through hybrid and telework options has been a critical benefit to not only myself but to the state. In recent years we have experienced a significant increase in the cost of goods, services, fuel, homes, and other cost-of-living related expenses. However, wage increases have been modest and typically not separated from incentive increases and cost-of-living increases. I would recommend separating the two wage increases and provide a significant cost-of-living increase for state employees.

By providing a significant wage increase related to cost-of-living increases for employees, this will likely provide a long-term savings through the reduction of staff turnover, an increase in productivity and morale, and an increased in the ability to recruit talent. Additionally, it will allow state employee wages to more appropriately pace with industry wages. This is important as there appears to be occupations that have wage disparities. This has resulted in challenges filling and maintaining staffing for certain positions. I recognize that there is only a certain amount of money to go around. One possible solution is to "norm" the percentage increase based on salary or hourly wage amounts. The higher the salary, the lower the percentage increase or just do a fixed amount (i.e.: \$3 per hour raise for all employees or equivalent for salaried employees). This may not be a viable solution and may have already been considered but I thought I should mention it as the current cost-of-living has had quite a negative impact on everyone but especially those with middle to lower wages. Additionally, incentives for state employees who have obtained higher education degrees (bachelors, masters, and PhDs) is another possible option and increase the incentives if the higher degree was obtained from an Idaho or state-based college or university.

I have personally experienced challenges associated with wage disparities and strain due to cost-of-living increases. Based on my formal education, experience, and skills, I could obtain a significantly higher wage elsewhere. Currently, the benefits, flexibility, and ability to telework are what keep me with the state. However, maintaining benefits and wage increases are significant considerations for retaining my employment with the state. I appreciate your work on the CEC Committee and for your consideration related to employee feedback. Thanks again, and I hope you have a wonderful 2024!

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Learning & Development Specialist

 [Redacted]

 [Redacted]

 [Redacted]

To the Change in Employee Compensation (CEC) Committee –

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding compensation for state employees. I hope that the testimony provided to the CEC committee is considered as I have heard employees often pass on submitting testimony because they do not think it makes a difference and do not think the legislature is genuinely interested in their concerns. Please consider the following as the CEC Committee addresses this in the 2024 Legislative Session:

- It troubles me that the Legislature with S1191 (2023) is considering the removal of an important incentive (teleworking) for working for the State when it is so difficult to find employees in the first place. It confounds me that the Legislature is so worried about hearing a dog, a child, or laundry in the background. The issue should be - what work is not being done? I argue that I am more productive and am willing to spend more hours working than if I had to work from an office location. My time that I would have spent commuting is dedicated to my job. When employees were faced with increased work demands during the pandemic, the employees stepped up. We were already understaffed and the pandemic did nothing to help that. I would like the CEC Committee to know that if teleworking is no longer an option for many, they will look for employment elsewhere adding to the gap in staffing that is so prevalent.
- In addition to the increase in productivity and increased availability for state employees to work overtime, telework has saved the state an enormous amount of tax payers' money on building leases, and related costs for utilities, as well as office equipment and supplies. Further, sick time has been reduced both due to employees being able to work from home, but also not exposing their coworkers. Telework not only lowers costs for the state, but makes employee income go farther with reduced costs for transportation and child care.
- Although an increase to employee pay and benefits is not the only solution, it should be the largest part. Every state employee can use a pay increase in and no amount of "soft investments in the human aspect of work" can make up for it. Increases in pay for state employees are still needed despite the good faith effort in recent years to make up for years of neglect. The most important way to make work a fulfilling experience and communicate to employees that they are truly valued is by paying them accordingly and hopefully considering the testimony from State employees.
- With the budget surplus for the past three (3) years, this continues to be an ideal time to invest in state employees. In the lean times state employees lose jobs, take pay cuts, have unpaid furlough days, and agencies have budget holdbacks. In these times of budget surplus, the state needs to take the opportunity to invest in its corps of public servants and look towards the future with an eye towards anticipating the increasing public service needs of a rapidly growing state. In the end, trying to balance the budget on the back of state employees is a poor solution. This will only increase attrition and

decrease access to critical public services. Rather than seeing state employee pay and benefits as place to look for budget cuts, the citizens of Idaho are far better served by having a well-supported corps of public servants that the state continues to invest in.

- An additional idea to further state employee benefits would be to sponsor a bill changing Section 67-5333(2)(a), Idaho Code, that allows eligible state retirees to convert half of their unused sick leave to a sick leave account that can be used to pay qualifying insurance premiums. Once converted that half of the unused sick leave is used to pay premiums for “such health, dental, vision, long-term care, prescription drug, and life insurance programs as may be maintained by the state.” State employees have earned their sick leave. I ask that the Legislature consider increasing the percentage so that state employees may use all of their accumulated sick leave converted for use to cover health care premiums post-retirement. Retirement is a time when many state employees could use the additional funds to access services for health care needs.
- One benefit that state employees used to have was dedicated time off to be used for medical appointments (coded as MDA on timecards). Now it just comes out of vacation time, effectively reducing this benefit. Dedicated medical time off is a valuable benefit that should be reinstated.
- State employees should receive an increase to help cover the current inflation rate (in the West Region it is higher) and the cost of living is rising quickly. This doesn't cover the increase in property taxes and housing costs across the state but would help with these costs. State employees are falling further and further behind financially, which contributes both to low morale and attrition. While we support the 4.5% merit increase for state employees proposed by DHR, we think this should be higher due to continued increases in the cost of living.
- State employees feel undervalued by our legislators. The strategy from year-to-year seems to be, how can we avoid not making equitable, reasonable pay increases? The continual chipping away at benefits along with the unwillingness to provide cost of living increases or to bring pay closer to the private sector clearly contributes to this. If there is one thing we know, if you truly value something, you are willing to pay for it. State employees provide a wide range of services critical to maintaining services and infrastructure for Idaho citizens. Legislators seem to think that the benefits make up for the gap in pay between the state and the private sector. They don't. The state offers competitive benefits, but many private employers offer solid benefits packages with better pay and flexible working conditions. We are valuable. And many of us are still leaving...
- While boosting starting pay for new employees is crucial, increasing the pay of experienced employees is just as crucial, including providing retention bonuses. What do you think it does for morale when new and inexperienced employees start at pay levels above experienced employees who have provided years of dedicated service? There must be a balance. The state employees with Institutional knowledge need to be incentivized to stay.

- State employees not only have a strong work ethic, but many feel that public service is a calling and are deeply committed to making Idaho a better place to live by serving its citizens. So, why are they leaving in such numbers? In many cases, they simply can't afford to continue in state service, and the benefits offered do not make up for this. Having health insurance and PERSI is great, but if I cannot keep up with the basic costs of food, mortgage or rent, transportation, and child care, I can't afford to keep working for the state and continue going in the hole financially.
- The remaining state employees are overworked as they then carry the responsibilities left by all the vacated positions in addition to the already heavy workloads. Chronic understaffing also contributes to low morale and attrition. Cutting telework options will further exacerbate this as this will contribute to further attrition.

Please know that I love my job, and I want to stay - Motivate me to stay. More increases are needed and this would help every state employee.

Thank you for your time.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] | Idaho Dept. of Health & Welfare
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Written Testimony regarding Change in Employee Compensation (CEC)

By [REDACTED]

I strongly advise a change in employee compensation to withstand the cost of living.

As a single 24-year-old woman with a full-time job, daily living expenses have required many other young adults (like me) to acquire a second part time job, just to make ends meet.

Others like me experience the same struggles, like deciding to pay dr. appointment bill or buying groceries.

Due to the inadequate time frame for this testimony to be sent out, I would like to show how the living cost does not withstand today's pay.

Example: Full Time

18\$/hour 160 hours a month = \$2880

Taxes \$472/ month
Insurance \$76/month
Retirement \$180/month
Rent \$1300/ month
Car \$400

Auto Insurance \$150

Phone \$100

Utilities \$200

At this rate your left with about \$2 for the rest of the month.

That doesn't cover the 40-50\$ a week in fuel

So -\$202 a month now

Groceries for a single adult range about 100\$ week. 400\$/monthly

(This may or may not cover household expenses like laundry soap, shampoo, toilet paper, Ext)

That's -\$602

This doesn't even begin to cover if you get a blown tire, broken bone, a ticket, or have any money away in savings if you happen to get sick and need more than a couple days off from work. Then add any kind of childcare, birth of a child, loss of a child, raising a child. And even being compensated to withstand gas and groceries, your still not able to keep up with any hobbies or your pretty much stuck sitting on your couch.

The list can go on. Today's pay does not compete with inflation.

Hello Christine,

My name is [REDACTED], this is my first time writing a testimony. And the first time anyone wants to hear what the employee has to say.

Please find my testimony attached for your reference.

Thank you.

[REDACTED]

Technical Records Specialist

Idaho State Department of Agriculture

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Hello! Here are my comments for the CEC Committee regarding DHRs SFY 2025 CEC and Benefits Report.

COMMENTS

As a vested state employee and lifelong Idaho resident, I support DHRs recommendations as outlined in their SFY 2025 CEC and Benefits Report. I've included a screenshot of the DHR recommendations below and will address each of their recommendations.

FISCAL YEAR 2025 CEC RECOMMENDATION AND COST PROJECTION

Pursuant to Idaho Code 67-5309C, DHR must include recommendations on the following components:

Salary structure adjustment, specific occupational inequities (payline exceptions), merit pay increase, and employee benefit package.

For Fiscal Year 2025, the DHR recommendation for Change in Employee Compensation is as follows:

- 1) Fund a 4.5% merit-based increase for all permanent employees to recognize and reward state employee performance.
- 2) Increase the Primary Salary Structure midpoints upward on average of 3.7% and the Public Safety Structure midpoints upward on average 5.8%. Implement two (2) new salary structures for Information Technology (IT)/Engineering and Nursing/Healthcare.
- 3) Fund an additional 5.5% market-based increase for positions assigned to the IT/Engineering and Nursing/Healthcare salary structures (Appendix D).
- 4) Maintain the State's existing benefits and retirement package.
- 5) Continue with the job classifications that are currently on payline exception to address specific recruitment and retention issues.

1. In my time working with the state (about 7 years), the CEC and Benefit Reports consistently indicate Idaho state employee pay rates are behind the public and private markets. I personally appreciate the continued support in trying to minimize that gap and align our existing state employee salaries with comparable markets, and support the recommendation in DHRs report to fund a 4.5% merit-based increase for all permanent employees to recognize and reward employee performance. When comparing state employee salary requirements and structures with the public market, state employees are not guaranteed a cost of living adjustment or merit-based award. With the vastly changing economy, seasoned state employees cannot always keep up with the standard of living in their geographic location. To retain staff and to maintain a broader mix of state employees from every corner of Idaho, merit-based increases are a necessity. I personally am not profiting a great amount working for the state, and I don't expect to. However, I do expect to be paid for my experience, my skill set, and my efforts, and think it's reasonable to expect a level of pay that allows me to generate a savings and/or invest in my future. I should be compensated for my unique level of effort and feel the proposed merit-based increase aligns with the hard work I contribute to our programs year after year.
2. I support increasing the primary salary structure midpoints. In addition to staying competitive and attracting new staff, the increase may encourage existing staff to promote or shift within our state agency workforce. We continue to lose staff to the private market, and often, to groups contracted by the state (like Magellan Healthcare or CSG Government Solutions). Some staff won't move to new agencies or other roles because they will be paid less in their new job, which may be multiple pay grades higher. New salary structures for IT/engineering and nursing/healthcare will further contribute to keep us competitive. It's also a disservice to individuals in these professions for us to demand a specific level of education, licensure, or experience, and offer them a grossly under paid position for complex work.
3. As noted above, IT/engineering and nursing/healthcare positions often require enhanced education, experience, and/or licensure. Idahoans lose when we aren't able to hire talented staff in these professions. When we examine goals of cost containment and process improvement, we are often left contracting this work out to other companies with more resources because we cannot find internal staff or newly hired candidates to perform these more complex duties. Contracts are expensive and as we have learned over the years, some institutional/on-the-job knowledge is critical to our success of implementing long term and thoughtful solutions.
4. Maintaining the existing benefits package is critical for staff retention. I often hear people say they stay with the state for the insurance and the pension; it's the comprehensive benefit package that affords me the opportunity to work for the state. Without the affordable insurance and pension plan, I wouldn't be able to work for the state as I wouldn't have enough money to pay insurance premiums, save for retirements, and maintain my household expenses. Both the insurance and pension benefits serve current employees and their families well. Employee-funded increases to our mandatory pension contribution or changes in our insurance premiums and/or deductibles creates a negative impact to staff and is often counter-productive to any of

the provided CECs. I support maintaining the existing benefit and retirement package without raising the mandatory contributions at the employee's expense.

- a. If there is a change being explored for the pension, I think every state employee (whether a permanent employee or elected and/or appointed officials) should be expected to work the same amount of time to become vested. Asking permanent staff to work 60 months and elected or appointed officials to work 5 months for that "paycheck for life" is unreasonable.
5. I support the efforts in place to recruit and retain challenging job classifications. However, a lot of latitude is provided for some of our job classifications, and I think it would be beneficial for DHR to assess the base requirements for specific job classifications. For example, a Program Specialist – DHW has the same base requirements; however, some programs hire clinicians for that position, requiring an advanced degree and clinical licensure, while other programs hire high school graduates for that job class. If we are requiring advanced educations/skills for different positions, they should be in a job classification that aligns with those requirements to increase pay parity and reduce compression.

In addition to the comments outlined above, we pay external groups, like Korn Ferry, a lot of money to assess our current state of affairs and look across other areas of the market to formulate recommendations. It seems worth the investment to actually incorporate their recommendations if we are going to solicit and pay them to do this level of work on a routine basis.

[REDACTED]

Medicaid Training Specialist

Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

Division of Medicaid – Operations Administration

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

To the Change in Employee Compensation (CEC) Committee –

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding compensation for state employees. I urge you to carefully consider the testimony provided by state employees to your committee. Many state employees simply pass on submitting such testimony because they do not think it makes a difference and do not think the legislature is genuinely interested in their concerns. Please consider the following as you address state employee compensation issues during the 2024 legislative session:

- It is troubling that the legislature under S1191 (2023) is/was considering a drastic reduction in teleworking options for state employees, This is a critical incentive for the State especially during these times in which it is so difficult to find (and retain) employees in the first place. It confounds me that the legislature is so worried about hearing a dog, a child, or laundry in the background (though most such issues were addressed early on during the initial stages of Covid.) The issue should be - what work is not being done? I am more productive and am willing to spend more hours working when I am working from home, than if I have to work from an office location. Time I would have spent commuting is dedicated to my job. When employees were faced with increased work demands during the pandemic, the employees stepped up. State agencies were already understaffed and the pandemic did nothing to help that. If teleworking is no longer option for many, they will look for employment elsewhere adding to the gap in staffing that is so prevalent.
- In addition to the increase in productivity and increased availability for state employees to work overtime, telework has saved the state an enormous amount of tax payers' money on building leases, and related costs for utilities, as well as office equipment and supplies. Further, sick time has been reduced both due to employees being able to work from home, but also not exposing their coworkers. Telework not only lowers costs for the state, but makes employee income go farther by reducing costs for transportation and child care.
- Although an increase to employee pay and benefits is not the only solution, it should be the largest part. Every state employee can use a pay increase and no amount of "soft investments in the human aspect of work" can make up for it. Increases in pay for state employees are still needed despite the good faith effort in recent years to make up for years of neglect. The most important way to make work a fulfilling experience and communicate to employees that they are truly valued is by paying them accordingly and hopefully considering the testimony from State employees.
- With the budget surplus for the past three (3) years, this continues to be an ideal time to invest in state employees. In the lean times state employees lose jobs, take pay cuts, have unpaid furlough days, and agencies have budget holdbacks. In these times of budget surplus, the state needs to take the opportunity to invest in its corps of public servants and look towards the future with an eye towards anticipating the increasing public service needs of a rapidly growing state. In the end, trying to balance the budget on the back of state employees is a self-defeating solution. This will only increase attrition and decrease access to critical public services. Rather than seeing state employee pay and benefits as place to look for budget cuts, the citizens of Idaho are far better served by having a well-supported corps of public servants that the state continues to invest in.
- An additional idea to further state employee benefits would be to sponsor a bill changing Section 67-5333(2)(a), Idaho Code, that allows eligible state retirees to convert half of their unused sick leave to a sick leave account that can be used to pay qualifying insurance premiums. Once converted, that half of the unused sick leave is used to pay premiums for "such health, dental, vision, long-term care, prescription drug, and life insurance programs as may be maintained by the state." State employees have earned their sick leave. I ask that the Legislature consider increasing

the percentage so that state employees may use all of their accumulated sick leave converted for use to cover health care premiums post-retirement. Retirement is a time when many state employees could use the additional funds to access services for health care needs.

- One benefit that state employees used to have was dedicated time off to be used for medical appointments (coded as MDA on timecards). Now it just comes out of vacation time, effectively reducing this benefit. Dedicated medical time off is a valuable benefit that should be reinstated.
- State employees should receive an increase to help cover the current inflation rate (in the Western Region of the US it is higher) and the cost of living is rising quickly. This doesn't cover the increase in property taxes and housing costs across the state, but would help with these costs. State employees are falling further and further behind financially, which contributes both to low morale and attrition. While we support the 4.5% merit increase for state employees proposed by DHR, we think this should be higher due to continued increases in the cost of living.
- State employees feel undervalued by our legislators. The strategy from year-to-year seems to be, how can we avoid not making equitable, reasonable pay increases? The continual chipping away at benefits along with the unwillingness to provide cost of living increases or to bring pay closer to the private sector clearly contributes to this. If there is one thing we know, if you truly value something, you are willing to pay for it. State employees provide a wide range of services critical to maintaining services and infrastructure for Idaho citizens. Legislators seem to think that the benefits make up for the gap in pay between the state and the private sector. They don't. The state offers competitive benefits, but many private employers offer solid benefits packages with better pay and flexible working conditions. We are valuable. And many of us are still leaving and taking our skills to the private sector.
- While boosting starting pay for new employees is crucial, increasing the pay of experienced employees is just as crucial, including providing retention bonuses. What do you think it does for morale when new and inexperienced employees start at pay levels above experienced employees who have provided years of dedicated service? There must be a balance. The state employees with institutional knowledge need to be incentivized to stay.
- State employees not only have a strong work ethic, but many feel that public service is a calling and are deeply committed to making Idaho a better place to live by serving its citizens. So, why are they leaving in such numbers? In many cases, they simply can't afford to continue in state service, and the benefits offered do not make up for this. Having health insurance and PERSI is great, but if I cannot keep up with the basic costs of food, mortgage or rent, transportation, and child care, I can't afford to keep working for the state and continue going in the hole financially.
- The remaining state employees are overworked as they then carry the responsibilities left by all the vacated positions in addition to the already heavy workloads. Chronic

understaffing also contributes to low morale and attrition. Finally, cutting telework options will further exacerbate this as this will contribute to further attrition.

Please know that I love my job, and I want to stay - Motivate me to stay. More increases in pay and benefits are needed; this will help every state employee and benefit the citizens of Idaho as well.

Thank you for your time.

[REDACTED]

Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

Administrative Rules Unit ([ARU](#))

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Good Afternoon,

I would like to write the below comments for review by the CEC committee;

Particularly in healthcare we have seen a shortage of nurses and healthcare leadership individuals. Our current nursing staff wages and leadership wages are well below the average that we are seeing in the public sector. As we struggle to hire talent at these wages our patients and residents suffer the consequences. I myself receive about 3 calls a week for job offers that range from 25% to 400% more salary than what I make here at the state. As I have been the longest lasting administrator in my position in the past couple of years it appears apparent that the wage is not enough to keep the staff. The VA pays 10\$ more an hour for nurses and will pay me an extra \$15 to work the same job with better benefits. This leads to many of our nursing staff taking traveling positions and moving to other jobs as they can not meet their basic needs. Long Term Care (Skilled Nursing) has especially been affected by these staffing shortages. As regulations continue to require minimum staffing numbers CMS has made it more difficult to meet these requirements and meet the needs of our nurses in a work-life balance due to the staffing and wage gaps we are seeing. The workforce now is less interested in benefits due to having to provide food for the table now. As we close the year of the employee I would urge the committee to take a look at nursing turnover and leadership wages to help the healthcare workers to provide top quality care by helping us retain and attract the talent we need to continue to provide the great care and support the residents of Idaho need and deserve.

Thank you for taking the time to review the above. I do not envy your task.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED] LNHA MHA

[REDACTED]

State Hospital South

Division of Behavioral Health

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Hi Christine,

Down below you can find my CEC testimony. Please let me know if you need any additional from me on my end. I hope you had a wonderful holiday!

- The average cost of a home in Boise in 2023 was anywhere between \$460,000 to \$490,000
 - My salary is approximately \$30,000 less than what it would need to be in order to comfortably afford a home of this price
- The average cost of rent in Boise in 2023 was \$1,327
 - That is approximately one full paycheck a month gone just in rent for someone with my pay
- Transportation tends to cost 9.98% more
 - If we are required to go back to the office, that will be an additional cost that needs to be factored into my already tight monthly budget (will we be getting paid more to offset the cost of going into an office?)
- On average, Boise's cost of living is 7% higher than the national average

At this rate, as a single individual having one job as a source of income, I will not be able to afford to live in the state that I call home. I am a 26-year-old with my Master's degree, and right now there is little to no incentive to continue to work in the public sector because I simply cannot afford to survive, let alone be able to afford to start a family or buy a home. I, and countless others, am in this line of work because we are passionate about serving our community and making this state the best it can be, but I need to afford to live NOW, not just reap of the benefits of working for the state when I retire in 35 years. There needs to be more of an incentive for people to stay in the public sector, and right now, the compensation does the state zero favors.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Idaho Department of Health & Welfare | Division of Behavioral Health

450 W. State St., 3rd Floor | Boise ID 83702

[REDACTED]

Hello. I strongly support a pay raise for the following reason. From May April 2021 to around May 2023 we had an inflation rate of above 4%. From March 22 to Nov 22 inflation was above 7%. It's important to maintain state infrastructure and we need qualified employees to do that. Considering upward mobility options are limited and that pay raises are flat each year, keeping up with the BLS's inflation rate should be a top priority. At minimum.

Please remember that I'm using the BLS inflation rate. As is public knowledge the BLS uses a weighted basket approach to determine the "rate of inflation." That means if a consumer spending category rises enough to move the overall rate to let's say 12%, they will remove the weights from that category in order to flatten out the "rate of inflation number" they post. Here is a practical example. When the cost of food doubled we didn't see the overall rate of inflation double however, that didn't mean your grocery bill is not 2x or more than it used to be.

We can quote all the rates and numbers we want. The fact still remains that it costs WAY MORE than 3% to live here in the valley than it did even one year ago. The valley is one of the most expensive places to live in the country. An example of how this impacts me and my family is the preexisting discrepancy in pay. Private employers in the valley pay 30-40k more per year for the same position. The pension and remote work options made the trade off in the past worthwhile. Now that food and housing are significantly more expensive, I can't justify this job to my family any longer. I recommend providing incentive for people to stay with the state especially considering the remote work changes that are coming.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Hello,

I am a Civil Engineer and have dedicated my career to serving the State of Idaho. I can testify that State Engineers are paid a fraction of what the private sectors pays, and this includes retirement and medical and dental benefits. A Civil Engineer working for the State of Idaho earns 50% of what the Federal Government pays for the same work, and education, which is also less than the private sector. For several years I have tolerated and justified this because we have been allowed to telework. However, the private sector for

Engineering allows for full time telework. The Federal Government allows for full time telework. I can confidently say, if legislature reduces the current three telework days per week to one or none, there will be a mass exit, because the State of Idaho will no longer be a competitive employer within the work force.

In my group we have not been able to hire and fill two engineering positions because the pay is not competitive with the private sector and Federal Government, as well as the lack of telework days. I have seen another group that I work with be unable to fill a position that has been open for three plus years because the pay is not competitive, but specifically as stated by the applicants, not offered telework.

I understand some positions need to have a presence in the office. However, in my specific career field, office presence is not needed/required and does not affect my job performance. Microsoft teams gives me the ability to video conference anyone at any time, instant message anyone at any time, and have access to all my resources because of the paperless data management system. All the customers I serve prefer online meetings as they can stay at their facility and decrease their downtime, and travel.

For me personally, I am less stressed when I do not have to commute, twice a day, I have more time with the family because I am saving on commute time, twice a day. There is less wear and tear on my vehicle and less gasoline expenses, which is important considering the pay is a fraction of the private sector and Federal Government. It creates less traffic for the people who need to have office presence, it decreases the air pollution from mobile point sources. All of this is then shown in my work productivity and morale for my job.

I have voiced for a very long time, that the State of Idaho should decrease the office footprint and allow the people who do not need an office presence to telework fulltime and return the monetary savings that would incur from saving on building leases to the taxpayers in the State of Idaho. Requiring people who do not need a presence in the office is a waste of money and unnecessary. There is a very old thought process that unfortunately exists but is slowly being phased out and it is, "Unless I can see you working, you are not working". Professionals who have spent thousands of dollars on a college education and to be a licensed engineer take great pride in their work. Engineers also have a code of ethics to uphold as part of their licensure. We are dedicated individuals with a strong moral compass and high ethics. Allowing us to telework is a very easy no-cost/cost saving benefit that would increase the employee morale, make the State of Idaho more competitive, and attract applicants. Increasing the pay would also be another step in that direction.

I challenge you to deeply think about the talking points I have raised.

Thank you for listening.

Signed Anonymous

Thank you for asking.

Last year the Legislature and Gov. Little approved a \$1.20/hour for each State employee (I got a letter stating I was approved for \$1.20 CEC). I earned an Exemplary Performance rating, but HR gave me .81? I feel like HR stole \$800 from me. Why am I penalized because someone earns less than I do? I really dislike the Comp Ratio. The longer we work for the State, the more we are penalized.

██████████ | **Technical Records Specialist II**

Idaho Department of Environmental Quality

2110 Ironwood Parkway, Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814

██████████
www.deq.idaho.gov

Dear Members of the Change in Employee Compensation Committee,

After listening to the first meeting, I am compelled to write as my concerns lie not only with compensation- my pay is also closely intertwined with concerns about staffing and workload. I am writing on my own behalf, not on the behalf of the state agency where I am employed. I am also a constituent in District 15.

I do appreciate those state employees that will be willing to share their unique experiences regarding their wages and positions in public, if given the opportunity. While they give good examples, we all know they are only a cross-section of all the situations that state employees find themselves in. Discussions about money are always difficult but they are very important, and I wanted to share my gratitude for the CEC committee's recommendations from previous years, and the final outcomes we have seen from JFAC. However, the other side of the coin is that I (and others) currently work alongside colleagues who are being hired nearly \$7.00 more an hour than we were. I applaud the legislative efforts that have been made in recent years to move the pay scale, but for those of us who have been here many years, some of us are not making much more than new hires. We have heard Human Resources wanting to put forth efforts to attract new employees, but those of us who "work the mission" and have done so for years, are met with "Thank you for your work" and a raise that keeps us barely ahead of new staff.

When I came from the private sector almost 17 years ago, I felt this move was the right one for me and, for the most part, I have not regretted that decision, but the days of feeling like I am making forward momentum in my work tasks, and having commensurate compensation are becoming fewer and fewer. My job predominantly entails quality assurance activities, including a fair amount of interaction with the public, providers, and applicants seeking services paid for by Medicaid. Turnover on my portion of the

statewide team, has left my team covering for open positions, often for months at a time, which has proven difficult when our own job tasks remain, and increase. Additionally, the width and breadth of Idaho is such that when someone is hired, it is often just one of us handling an entire region of the state. For a brand-new staff, this is a daunting task. When you add in the amount of training time it takes to get someone up to speed, due to the complexity of our program, it can be a year (or more) until they are reasonably confident in their day-to-day skills.

Over the last 5 years, our entire statewide team has had turnover in support staff and care management positions. We are also running on a thin line of 2 Program Managers, no Bureau Chief, and almost a completely new policy team, all while staring down the barrel of a lawsuit that is now almost 13 years in the making. We have lost project managers and DAGs who were actively involved in this endeavor. Compounded by the increased growth of our program (both services accessed and paid for and the number of approved providers), the 2022 report completed by OPE was right to determine that we have been afraid to ask for what we need and that we are tasked with an unrealistic amount of work.

I am grateful for the wage and benefits I receive, however, the untenable workload for us all has left us tired, and it will be a heavy lift to rally the troops to design/plan/prep/implement any service changes when the lawsuit moves forward.

Going forward, I would respectfully ask the following points be front of mind:

1. Careful consideration of all the information that will be presented and engage in meaningful dialogue on how we can meet the varied interests of state employees and taxpayers alike. My colleagues and I are both.
2. Approve at least a 4.5% CEC for state employees for FY 2025
3. Consider retention bonuses for long-time, valued, hardworking staff. By my estimation, nearly half of our Bureau is eligible for early retirement in the next 10 years. Is the Committee willing to consider the institutional knowledge that is here, and that continues to forge ahead each day, and recommend this type of compensation?

I do not envy the position you and the other members of the committee are in. To assist in deciding how dollars should be best spent to hire, maintain, and retain the best workers that Idaho can in state government is a daunting task. Thank you for your service to the citizens of Idaho.

Sincerely,



Boise, ID

and there will be painful decisions that this committee will have to make. Time has run out for delaying this adjustment.

Respectfully

[REDACTED]

Idaho Department of Environmental Quality

Lewiston Regional Office

[REDACTED]

Dear Change in Employee Compensation (CEC) Committee,

Thank you for your solicitation of comments from State employees as you consider recommendations for this year's CEC. I am writing to urge you to consider an increase to the CEC. As a manager of a staff of 12, I have seen firsthand how increased competition from other organizations has harmed the state workforce. My staff are responsible for drafting, issuing, and approving permit coverage for surface water discharge permits. I have had excessive turnover in my group in the past 2 years, primarily due to lack of competitive compensation. During each turnover event, the state taxpayers suffer due to reductions in efficiency. The cost to onboard new staff greatly exceeds the cost of retention. In order to provide the public service we are tasked with, it is pivotal that I am able to offer my staff increases in compensation to match the growing rates of inflation. Staff in Boise cannot afford to purchase a home on their current salaries. In order to retain a talented and efficient workforce, we must do what we can to provide them salaries to meet the current cost of living in Boise and beyond.

Thank you again for your consideration of my comments,

[REDACTED]

Idaho Department of Environmental Quality

1410 N. Hilton St., Boise, Idaho 83706

[REDACTED]

www.deq.idaho.gov

State wages are way below private sector wages. In order to retain the best State of Idaho employees it is imperative that the State try to come as close as they can to paying competitive wages.

Thank you for listening,

[REDACTED]
Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
444 Hospital Way, Suite #300, Pocatello, ID 83201
[REDACTED]

Good morning,

I just started at ISDA as a technical records specialist 2 about 4 months ago.

I am writing because the hourly rate that the legislature has allotted for this position is not enough.

Below is a break down of an example.

Technical Records Specialist 2: \$18.03 an hour x 40 hours per week, \$721.20 weekly x 2 = 1,442.4(before taxes) x 2 = \$2,884.8 monthly. After taxes I get \$1,188 per paycheck. That's \$2,376 take home.

Now lets breakdown the cost of living:

Rent Boise Studio: average \$1441(does not include utilities)

\$935 left over

Car insurance: \$201

\$734 left over

Gas to and from work \$300monthly

\$434 left over

Utilities,

Electric roughly \$186(fall and winter)

\$248 left over

Phone: \$90

\$158 left over for food.

I can understand how pre-covid the hourly was ok to survive off, but not now 3 years later.

How is the state legislature allowing this to go on?

I've seen turn over in my small time here and I know why the reason is.

I've done a small calculation, if we bump that up to \$21.75(3 times minimum wage) there might just be enough incentive for employee retention.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Idaho State Department of Agriculture

Division of Agricultural Resources
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

To whom it may concern,

I am a 58-year-old 30-year state employee, and I will be starting a part-time job this weekend to cover our medical bills and over all increases in expenses.

At the beginning of this fiscal year, both my wife (who is also a state employee) and I received a generous raise, but it was all wiped out by the Trump tax break which Biden let expire.

Despite receiving raises our overall take home pay was \$200 less per month. With today's economy we can't absorb that.

After spending several months cutting costs where we can and even selling some of our possessions, I am forced to get a second job.

I am older than ever and working harder than ever, is that the American dream??

[REDACTED]
Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
1410 N Hilton, Boise, ID 83706

[REDACTED]
www.deq.idaho.gov

CEC Committee,

One of the beauties of Idaho that I've known since moving here is the abundance of lands available to the public, and the dedication and elevated morals and ethics of the employees and

personnel that tend to these lands, both city, state and federal. The best minds, people that inspire me daily, work for the government here in Idaho. So it is discouraging in the least to see the disparity in city and state wages in Idaho vs other states around the country. It has been known and felt for years that Idaho is losing bright, passionate and public-spirited minds to other states or private companies because the offers are simply too great to pass up. I've only just started my career, so it is even more disheartening to see my coworkers and mentors who have been here for 20 YEARS make so little more than me, while quite literally holding all of the knowledge of how our agency operates. They've put the work in, they've set aside personal gain, they've furthered the cause of creating a better Idaho, and they have little to show for it. It is a shame, and many have no other choice but to leave. And they will leave, and there will be no one to fill the gap, and all of Idaho will be worse for it. This committee and all future CEC committees have an opportunity to invest in the future of Idaho. That is what the public is trusting you to do, to use their funds to invest in Idaho's future, and you have a wonderful opportunity to start now.

In honor of the great, selfless and inspiring minds in the City of Boise Parks & Rec and Forestry sections:

“A society grows great when old men (and women) plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in.”

And for you, CEC committee:

"History is alive in the present." - Beau Miles

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Idaho Department of Water Resources

[REDACTED]

322 Front Street, Boise, Idaho 83720

Working in the Eastern Region, the biggest thing I have noticed is we feel unrecognized. We will get emails over various employee appreciation events that are happening in Boise but nothing happens our way. I think a huge appreciation that would even out the board, is for everyone to have their birthday off as a paid holiday. This is a simple benefit that makes it personal for each employee.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Water District 1

900 N Skyline Dr., Suite A

Idaho Falls, ID 83402

[REDACTED]

Hi,

I am a current state employee living in Boise, Idaho. I have attached a PDF of and will copy my personal testimony regarding employee compensation in the body of this email.

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

//

Dear Idaho Change in Employee Compensation Committee,

I am writing this letter regarding the current compensation rate of Agriculture Investigator Senior with the Idaho State Department of Agriculture. The current base starting wage of \$23.18/hr has been demonstrated to be inadequate to support a single person living in the Boise area. Coming from out of state and being without roommates, I am subjected to the average 1 bedroom rent prices of ~\$1,400 per month. To put this into perspective, one 40-hour bi-weekly take home paycheck (after taxes, medical, and PERSI) equates to \$1,355. While not even being enough to cover 1 month's rent, this does not include other things such as student loans, a car payment, power/internet bills, groceries, and gas of which I am all subjected to on a monthly basis. For the 5 months I have been in this position, I have contributed nothing to a 401k or savings account due to the pay that the state provides. This should not be the case for any full-time covered state worker. Given the amount of ever-increasing hard work that Agriculture Investigator Seniors with the Idaho State Department of Agriculture are subjected to, I hope this speaks to others in my position.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

At 3:00 pm on December 26th, we were sent an email inviting us to provide feedback to the CEC Committee. We were given until 5:00 pm on the 27th to respond. Many people are on vacation and will not see the email or have a chance to respond. Not enough lead time was given to formulate a thoughtful response.

As an employee who has almost 30 years of state employment, I have had an opportunity to see a lot of change. When I first began employment, we had MDA or medical doctor appointment leave in addition to sick leave. That no longer exists. Newer hired employees can no longer take their sick leave and convert half of it to pay medical premiums. That benefit has been taken away. What I observe is that employees use their sick leave as soon as they get it and then when something occurs that they need more, they file for leave donation. Since I will be retiring soon, I will be throwing away over 500 hours of sick leave since I can only have half of it to pay premiums.

Employee appreciation used to mean that you picked out some type of item with the company logo. Now the managers fund some type of food out of their own pocket. The meaning has been diminished to a few words. If an employee wants clothing with the DEQ logo, they now buy it out of their own pocket.

Although it may seem trivial, if Christmas Eve fell on a workday, we might get released a couple hours early. That is no longer the case.

The past two years, rather than a CEC that was a percentage, it was a flat rate. The claim was to bring employees at the lower end of the scale up. What it has accomplished is to drive the more experienced and knowledgeable employees out. Our agency has seen high turnover most of which has gone to the City of Boise or to federal employment at an approximately 20% pay increase. We continue to have high turnover and a hard time filling positions.

As a side note, new hires need to be told that although there is the Persi system, you will not see a cost-of-living adjustment to PERSI benefits because all you will get is 1%. Your income will always fall behind inflation.

We have been told certain legislators (Senator Guthrie) want to require employees to return to the office without the telecommuting benefit. This small benefit has been a game changer in work life balance. Many employees were hired with the benefit of a hybrid schedule and are unlikely to continue with the state if this happens. I am one of those. Sitting in a cubicle all day is not good for your health, and we still use Microsoft teams for most of our meetings anyway. Since the State refuses to provide CEC's that reflect a cost of living, the savings can be found by not commuting every day, eating at home, drinking my coffee, and saving on clothing expenses. We are still tracked and required to submit a weekly report on our activities. We have employees that telecommute from other states as well as employees in other offices that work for our Boise office. We can barely hire IT staff or engineers and it will now become even harder to recruit.

There are probably many more things I could go on about. That would include all the issues with LUMA and having a centralized IT department. What I do know after taking many polls such as the more recent Gallup poll that it is just an exercise to make someone happy, but it does not instill change. I listened to a lot of the legislative sessions last year. They do not show much compassion for state employees. Despite the appeal from the department heads regarding turnover and hiring difficulties they ignored everything.

I expect this email will fall on deaf ears but since I am out the door soon it won't matter. I do have a hard time encouraging any young person to work for the state.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Idaho Department of Environmental Quality

1410 N. Hilton St., Boise, Idaho 83706

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

www.deq.idaho.gov

Dear CEC Committee,

While I enjoy many aspects of working for a State Agency in Idaho, I'm on the brink of being driven out of government service and entering the private sector like so many of my colleagues have done. While the CECs over the past few years are appreciated, they don't come close to keeping up with inflation in a workplace where its already understood salaries are lower than in similar fields outside of government. The price of everything around us has skyrocketed. Even with raises over the past few years, I find my family has less disposable income to try and make ends meet. I implore you to approve a generous CEC this year. Not only is it the right thing to do for employees, but it will also create a better end result at the ground level. It would decrease employee turnover and stress, thereby creating more unified team members while increasing the quality of work for the State of Idaho.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

Idaho Department of Environmental Quality

Good Morning,

Here are my general thoughts and observations on the LUMA system. My overall user experience has been frustrated by non-intuitive layouts and functionality and mediocre to poor instruction and guidance. My experience so far has been limited to submitting and approving timesheets, submitting travel requests and expense reports, and submitting purchase requests. I am curious how the annual evaluation submission experience will be this winter.

I am not against changing to more efficient systems and recognize there will always be a learning curve. Handled properly, change can be seamless, or at the very least, not an obstruction to progress. Changing to LUMA has not led to more efficiencies, has not been seamless, and has added obstructions to our business processes, and has a steep learning curve.

- The product seemed unfinished when it was rolled out. Entire modules were not functional. Modules users were instructed to use were only partially functional, and some features of these modules were not functional at all.
- It is evident the State of Idaho processes were forced to fit into the LUMA architecture, rather than the LUMA architecture being constructed to meet the State of Idaho processes. Using an “off the shelf” system may have seemed the “cost-effective” option, but the implementation was poor, and I venture to say has cost the State more than what the anticipated savings were.
- The processes steps and layout of the tools are not intuitive, and the instructions provided were also not clear. There were many examples of staff who stumbled on some useful functionality through trial and error assisting other staff.
- Most, if not all, chatter I hear from colleagues about LUMA is negative.

I do not have comments to provide on employee compensation.

Regards,

[Redacted]

Water Compliance Bureau

[Redacted]

December 27, 2023

Dear Ms. Otto,

I am writing to bring to your attention a matter of considerable concern among our workforce—the impact of the rising cost of housing and inflation on our employees' financial well-being. As a dedicated member of the Idaho State Department of Agriculture, I've witnessed the challenges faced by state employees due to the escalating expenses, particularly in housing, and the broader effects of inflation.

It's no secret that the cost of living, especially in terms of housing expenses, has increased substantially over the past few years. This surge in expenses has significantly affected the states employees' ability to manage their household budgets effectively. Many are grappling with increased financial pressure, making it increasingly challenging for them to maintain a reasonable standard of living despite their hard work and dedication to our state.

Currently my household consists of two state employees. My Husband works for the Idaho Transportation Department (3 Years) and myself at the Idaho Dept of Agriculture (6 Years). At this point in our lives, we were getting ready to buy our first home, when the surge of housing costs made it nearly impossible for a 2-person family who both work for the state of Idaho to afford a modest home, within 60 minutes of where we work. Then factoring in the costs of basic apartments, which have skyrocketed to an average of \$1300-2500.00 a month to live within a reasonable commuting distance, is causing considerable financial strain.

As the cost of goods and services continues to rise, their purchasing power diminishes, impacting their ability to meet not only housing expenses but also everyday needs. Many valuable state employees are moving to the private sector as well as out of state. I am personally considering leaving the state because of the economic strain.

Currently, I work with a single mother at the ISDA who must work two jobs to stay on top of rising housing and food costs. It boggles the mind is that a State employee is unable to maintain basic needs while maintaining a State Job, when 20-30 years ago, a single head of household work for the state was able to maintain their entire family on a single salary that the state provided.

In light of these economic realities, I strongly advocate for a comprehensive review of our employee compensation structure. Adjusting our compensation to align with the rising cost of living, especially housing, would serve as a crucial lifeline for our employees. It would not only alleviate their financial burdens but also demonstrate our commitment to their well-being and acknowledge their invaluable contributions to our state.

I urge the committee to consider the broader economic landscape and the direct impact it has on our employees. A thoughtful and fair adjustment in compensation would not only enhance employee morale and retention but also solidify our position as an employer that values and supports its workforce.

I am willing to offer any necessary assistance or information to support this cause. Your careful consideration of this matter is deeply appreciated, and I am hopeful for a positive outcome that will benefit both our employees and the state.

Thank you for your attention to this issue.

Have a great day,



Financial Program Specialist

Idaho State Department of Agriculture

[REDACTED]

Hi there,

Not sure what I am supposed to write exactly but I hope this helps!

I am a Part time Museum Educator and I absolutely love my job. I think it has a lot of potential for growth within the museum and research field if i stick to it, however it is hard to make ends meet. As a part time worker for the state we are limited to 19.5 hours weekly. This is a little bit of a slap in the face since it's only 30 minutes away from receiving benefits. Yet when it comes to special events and camps we are expected to come in for a 40 hour week which could compromise any other part time we have that is necessary to pay the bills on such a low salary. It just feels like there is no balance when it comes to these positions in terms of the lack of hours or benefits. I think that is probably why the turnover rate is so high despite it being such a great job.

Thank you for meeting to hear our concerns and I hope this helps go toward creating solutions for this institution.

Sincerely,



IDAHO STATE
**HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

[REDACTED]

Idaho State Museum

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Dr.
Boise, ID 83702

Good morning,

I am writing to you about employee compensation. I am the Senior Water Quality Scientist for the Department of Environmental Quality of the State of Idaho. My team works hard every day to help ensure that surface water quality is improved or maintained. We also provide guidance to stakeholders in interpreting our water quality standards. I have three very talented, dedicated, hardworking employees, whom I know I will have only for a short time because the financial compensation and ability for financial growth the DEQ can offer them is extremely limited. Understanding our complex water quality rules requires time and a strong chemistry background, so when yet another employee leaves, I must devote a tremendous amount of time and effort recruiting and training someone new. All three of my employees are extremely well educated and could easily make more money in private industry or with the Environmental Protection Agency doing similar work. I have requested retention bonuses and merit increases but have been told they are rare, essentially not available. The few incentives I can offer such as teleworking are being threatened without any logical justifications. It is absolutely critical that our State employee salaries are increased to keep up with inflation or we will continue to lose so many quality employees. This does not make any fiscal sense, it's bad for the people of Idaho and ultimately, for one of the most precious resources we have, the waters of the State of Idaho.

Thank you for taking the time to read this,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Idaho Department of Environmental Quality

1410 North Hilton Street, Boise, ID 83706

[REDACTED]

www.deq.idaho.gov/

Wages are stagnate compared to the national averages. With the cost of living rising, trying to stay a float is a joke to so many because our pay doesn't increase as everything else around us. I know working for the state is not a luxury job, will probably never see a bonus, nor attend a holiday party that the state puts on.

With that being said, I am thankful that I am employed and have a way to support my family, it would just be nice to see that even though the state can't give us the little things, they can still appreciate their employees and ensure they are receiving the best wages to maintain an affordable lifestyle.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

Registered Medical Assistant

Southwest Idaho Treatment Center

1660 11th Ave N

Nampa, ID 83686

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

December 27, 2023

RE: Change in Employee Compensation (CEC)

Dear CEC Committee,

My name is [REDACTED] and work for The State of Idaho Office of Risk Management. I have recently been notified that you would like to hear our thoughts on the upcoming hearing regarding the Change in Employee Compensation. As an employee of the great State of Idaho, a change in employee compensation is greatly needed. With the current economic state the way it is with regards to inflation, the cost of living has greatly increased over the past couple of years. Thus, making it harder to make ends meet with personal living costs. I strongly support a raise in employee compensation and urge you to vote in favor of this motion.

I appreciate your time and consideration.

5-Second Customer Satisfaction Survey: [Rate Us!](#)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Office of Risk Management

Department of Administration



[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Web: www.adm.idaho.gov

Dear CEC Committee,

I have been an employee of the Department for over 12 years, in my time at DHW I have held several positions and am coming to you with the knowledge of all the positions held prior to my current position in licensing. I was a case manager prior to moving to the licensing team and even at that time, I was upset to hear that licensing was not part of the 7% raise that case management and safety received. Licensing works hand in hand with safety and case management and they have always been the backbone of the program. Every time case managers need to find placements specific to a child's needs, we would turn to licensing. They know the families they license a lot better than workers and they can help identify families that can meet a child's specific needs. When we needed an emergency placement and wanted to Codex a family, we turned to licensing. They drop what they are doing to rush and get someone licensed. When we were absolutely drowning in work and we needed a last-minute transport or anything similar, an email was sent to licensing to help out. They are the ones that are supporting our foster families and do what they can to keep foster homes who have been burnt out by the lack of responsiveness from busy caseworkers.

Many times (because our schedules can be a bit more flexible than safety or case management) we are the ones helping transport children's long distances, staying overnight with children etc. I remember being a case manager and hearing that licensing would not be receiving the 7% and thinking "Oh my goodness, they are going to stop helping with all of the extra things we ask of them, and they rightly should". I could see why they would have no reason to go above and beyond when they weren't being appreciated. In an attempt to make them feel valued several of us case managers and a supervisor got together and did fun things for them weekly. I was tasked with making them personalized mugs and cute signs for their office with my crafting abilities. Even then, I saw how valuable they were to our success. Licensing workers saved my day, more times than I can count.

At least in our region, licensing was always the elite team. We would turn to them for advice and guidance. Only the best workers were hired to be on the licensing team and only selected from within case management and safety. The employees on this team have been with the Department a lot longer than most of case management and safety put together and they are now making less than all of the new workers. Unfortunately, now it feels like a demotion being on the licensing team because of the fact that they did not receive the 7% pay increase. I do feel that this affects the morale of workers and in turn can affect the extent they are willing to go to help out with extra duties.

Not including licensing in the pay increase does alienate them from feeling like they are a valued part of the team. You tell me, if this would not affect the amount of "extra" work you put in. If this would not determine how much you are willing to do outside of the scope of your assigned duties. The Department over the years has been negligent in retaining employees and this is a perfect example of how that happens. I can say with certainty that even if case management was hard, workers had the mindset of still being able to "move up" by getting hired on the licensing team at some point and that kept people going. Now unless you are aiming at a supervisor position there is no "moving up". This mentality adds to the many other things that result in burnout and leaving the Department. I myself recently looked at other jobs and know that the Hospital locally was paying more than the Department but I am the type of person who also wants to work at a place where I feel I can make more of a difference. That is why I stayed. Can I say that as my family grows and the cost of living continues to increase, I won't be forced to make a different decision, no. I do however, have a hope that you will see the value in making things more equitable to retain those of us who value our work but also want to be valued in return. I do apologize if this comes across as an angry employee, if anything I would say a hurt employee, but I have not lost hope that things can change. I have seen the Department be somewhat of a pendulum in my years here. Thanks for your time.

[REDACTED]
Children and Family Services
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Comments to the Change in Employee Compensation Committee for FY25
By Fred Birnbaum with the Idaho Freedom Foundation

Summary

The Idaho Freedom Foundation does not support the recommendation of a 4.5% CEC for all permanent employees. We believe that the CEC should be no higher than 4% for FY25 because this is consistent with the forecasted industry increase as presented on page 30 of the FY25 CEC benefits [report](#). We would also note that on page 30, the actual average salary increase across industries was 4.4% last year. On page 123 of the CEC report, it was noted that the Idaho state average increase following the last CEC was 5.2%, which exceeded the industry average of 4.4%. Therefore, we do not believe it is necessary to provide an increase greater than the industry average two years in a row. We would also note that the 4.5% baseline recommendation is likely to be exceeded given the payline exceptions and higher amounts for “market-based increases,” for IT, engineering, nursing, and healthcare. The aforementioned groups are to be provided an average increase closer to 10%.

Other comments on the process

The Idaho Freedom Foundation has provided testimony (verbal and written) to this committee since 2017. We would repeat many of the concerns voiced in the past about the process.

- The process is biased toward making the case for an increase. There is always an emphasis placed on positions with the highest turnover rate but no mention of those with low turnover rates. This is important because the picture painted always suggests that increases will never be adequate given the high turnover rate.
- The turnover rate cited at 18.9% on page 117 is for total turnover. Although reasons given include pay, retirement, other career opportunities, and management, there isn't the detail on voluntary turnover that was provided in past years. Pay was cited by 24.86% as their reason for exiting. However, with an 18.9% turnover rate, this means that 4.7% of the total workforce of state employees left state employment for pay. However in past years, departure for the private sector was also listed. As we noted in our comments last year, “However, according to Appendix U of the CEC report, only 2.2% of state employees who separated in FY22 listed taking a private sector job as the reason. This is not an outlier; it is consistent with FY21's separation rate to take a private sector job of 1.6%”
- Turnover is listed for classified employees only, and moving to another agency is counted as turnover. There is a huge variation in turnover by agency as well as the vacancy rate by agency. These variations warrant further review.
- We are no longer told what percentage of state employees left for a private sector job. This would be a good indicator of total compensation competitiveness.

- The data comparing wages to other private sector and public sector organizations includes Washington, Oregon, and Utah. However, no adjustment is made for cost of living differences.
- The value of PERSI's defined benefit pension plan is noted on page 25 as follows, "The State's DB plan continues to be competitive when compared to the private sector at an impressive 161% above the 50th percentile of the private sector market." Again, perhaps this is why we can infer from past data that the state is not uncompetitive with the private sector. Overall, only 9% of employers provide a [DB plan](#).
- As we have pointed out in previous years' comments, we have a situation where advocacy for state employees is not balanced with advocacy for taxpayers, self-employed individuals, and small businesses. When we reviewed the comments from the 193-page public comment compendium provided last year, it was clear that this was almost entirely from state employees and agencies, uniformly asking for higher wages. What value is there in seeking out these comments? Of course people are going to ask for more pay if you ask for their comments.
- Idaho Code 67-5309A includes the phrase that compensation should "retain employees who have a commitment to public service excellence." In this spirit, we believe that the state should be neither the employer of first resort nor the employer of last resort for Idahoans. Given all of the advantages associated with public employment including job security and other intangibles, the state should expect turnover and vacancies in a job market with 1.5 jobs per job seeker.

Sincerely,

Fred Birnbaum

Director of Legislative Affairs, Idaho Freedom Foundation and Idaho Freedom Action

802 W. Bannock Street, Suite 405

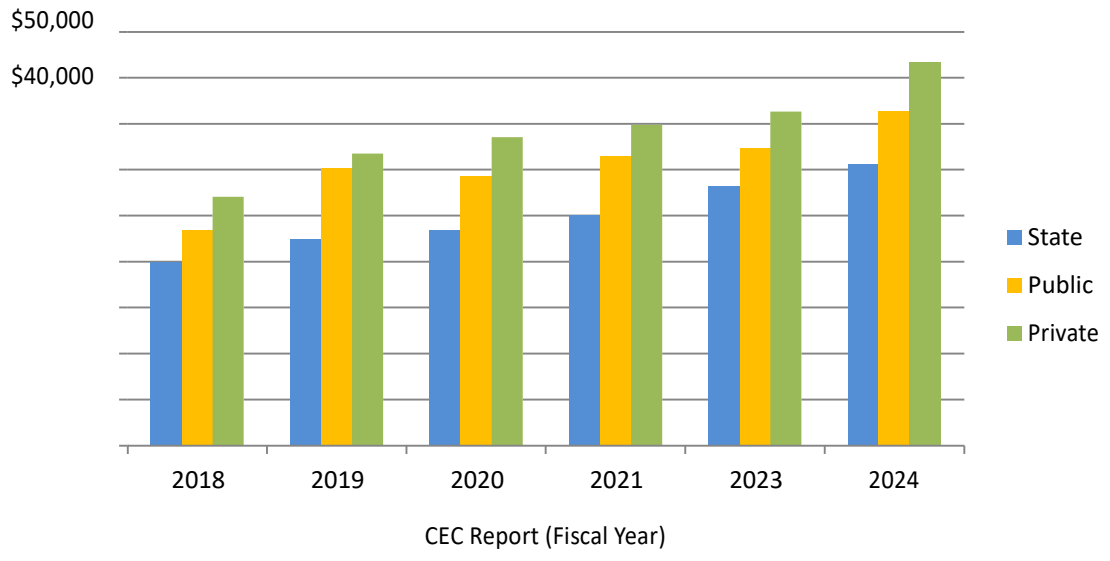
Boise, ID 83702

December 27, 2023

Dear Members of the Committee on Employee Compensation:

I am a state employee who shares your goal of a lean and efficient state government. Please look at this graph. The data is taken from seven years of CEC reports, and it shows how even with regular increases of 2-4%, the state is merely treading water with regards to other employment sectors:

Compensation	\$130,000	\$100,000	\$70,000
	\$120,000	\$90,000	0
	\$110,000	\$80,000	\$60,000
			0



If Idaho wants to close the gap between its salary and the market, it must award raises that are greater than inflation. If you want to catch up, you gotta run faster than the other guy!

With infrastructure issues, we typically present the problem as a numeric target (“\$450m needed to repair Idaho’s bridges”). Please ask DHR to calculate the total price tag to bring state employee pay, on average, up to public sector levels. Once we have that number, we can finally see the size of the problem and decide how to proceed.

[REDACTED]

Subject: Ensuring Fair Compensation for Idaho State Employees

Dear Members of the Idaho Change in Employee Compensation (CEC) Committee,

I am writing to provide testimony regarding employee compensation for State of Idaho employees. As an employee serving the public interest in Idaho, I have witnessed the great work of my colleagues in serving our state. I have been amazed by their commitment to responsible government while in a thankless and often publicly ridiculed job, yet they still press on providing the best service to the constituents of our great state.

Working in a financial role, I often see and hear about the financial struggles of our employees, whether it be struggling to make ends meet with the housing costs consuming more than the recommended 30% of their gross income or the impact of inflation on gasoline and food. To attract and retain top talent within the state government, we must align state employee compensation with the economic realities of living in Idaho.

To afford a decent standard of living in Idaho, it is estimated that a single individual without a family should earn a salary of \$58,634, or \$28.19 per hour, according to an analysis by the personal finance website GoBankingRates.com. In the fiscal year 2023, the State of Idaho had roughly 72% of employees compensated below the recommended salary, with roughly 40% of those employees near or below the 133% Federal Poverty Level (\$19,391), making them nearly eligible or eligible for Medicaid assistance.

A fair and competitive compensation package is a matter of justice for our hardworking employees, as our employees should never be forced to use welfare benefits to survive. When employees are worried about meeting their basic needs, they are less engaged and more eager to take a better-paying industry role when the opportunity presents itself.

A well-compensated workforce is more likely to remain motivated, dedicated, and focused on delivering high-quality services to the citizens of Idaho. I urge the Idaho CEC Committee to

carefully consider the data on the cost of living in Idaho and its impact on the financial well-being of state employees.

Thank you for allowing this testimony and your attention to this important matter.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Department of Administration



5-Second Customer Satisfaction Survey: [Rate Us!](#)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Web: www.adm.idaho.gov

It seems like everyone over at the legislature wonders why there's high turnover in the state, why we can't fill positions, why employees don't stay... The state does all these moral surveys to try to figure out what the issue is. Pay would fix most of the issues.

With the inflation and pay disparity the last couple of years the state of Idaho needs to be more aggressive than it has been with CEC's. This is especially applicable for enforcement and more technical positions. Enforcement/compliance positions are difficult to do in today's political atmosphere, everyone hates government regulation (until they themselves have an issue when someone else is breaking Idaho laws). For most technical positions at DEQ it doesn't take much effort to look online and find several similar positions that pay 50%-100+% more with great benefits that are completely work from home. I don't expect to get a 50% raise but be more aggressive and get us in the ballpark. In addition to CEC's, to fix pay rate compression you should give a years of service raise as well because we have brand new state employees making basically the same pay as employees that have years of experience with the state.

Also, the last couple years it seems like you have sent this CEC testimony email out and given a week for employees to respond. This year, sending the email out the day after Christmas and asking for it to be turned in the next day when most people take time off gives the impression that you don't really want employee feedback.

[REDACTED]
Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
650 Addison Avenue West, Suite 110

[REDACTED]
<http://www.deq.idaho.gov/>

Hello.

I am a state employee that falls into the L paygrade. The CEC report that has been published shows that the average pay for my paygrade in Idaho is \$65,644 annually. This appears to be a decent number, but what this number doesn't show is how much of that salary is not take-home pay. While the benefits package with the state is great, and I will appreciate my PERSI payments after retirement, I also must think about the 30 or so more years I have before I get to a point where I can start considering retirement. If I cannot afford housing, food, and other necessities until retirement, then the retirement checks aren't really going to matter.

According to the number above, I should make about \$5,470 each month. If we divide that by 2.4 to get the average paycheck amount, it comes to \$2,279. After taxes (with no additional withholding added – just the required amount), retirement (the lowest required amount taken), and the high deductible (cheapest option) are taken out of my paycheck, I'm left with \$1,725 per paycheck. Multiply that by 2.4 to get the monthly take home pay and it comes to \$4,140. I come in at \$1330 less take-home than the average pay listed in your report.

We all know that prices across the board have gone up over the last few years. Interest rates are also going up, making big purchases cost significantly more. If you are buying a home or a car, you will be paying hundreds more per month in interest alone on top of the inflated prices. Let's say someone at paygrade L is looking to buy a home in Ada County to be close to their office. With the market prices of homes now, the mortgage on a 2-bedroom home is nearly \$2000/month (on the low end) if you can put a 20% down payment on the home and the home doesn't have high HOA fees. At that price, half of their take-home pay is now gone. Rent is also very expensive, with single rooms going for \$1000 in Ada County. Add a car payment of \$300/month for a reliable used car that hopefully doesn't need to go to the shop often, plus insurance for the car at about \$50 a month, and their take-home balance is now at \$1790. They will also need to put gas in the car to get to and from work if they work in an office. Let's say they're pretty close to their office, so they only need to fill up twice a month. There's another \$50/month. Their balance is now \$1740. Water, sewer, trash, gas, and power all need to be paid. For a 2-bedroom house, it would probably average around \$80/month for power if they do level pay to balance out the A/C months in the summer. Gas is still lower, so it would probably level out to about \$20/month. Water, sewer, and trash comes in at around \$100/month. Their balance is now \$1540.

In today's world, a phone and internet are required, especially if they're telecommuting as the state does not pay for the internet. They could possibly get internet through their phone company at a discount, so the phone bill and internet together for a single person on the plan could be around \$80-100 a month. \$1460 is what they have left now.

Food is also much more spendy than it used to be. If they want to have a balanced diet of foods other than ramen and tuna, they will be paying a higher price for other meats, fruits, and veggies. Let's say they're good with coupons and don't go out to eat. They spend around 350-400 on groceries for 3 meals a day. They're left with just over \$1000 at the end of the month after just paying for the necessities.

At this level of pay, how do they build up a savings and still get to enjoy things that make working so much worth it? If you should have a savings of at least several months' worth of bills in case an emergency happens, it will take them a full year of saving every bit to get that while not going out for any fun. No vacations, no going out to eat, no spending on gifts for loved ones. If they are a single parent to a younger child and have to pay for childcare while they work, they will easily have to pay at least \$600 a month for that. They're now down to around \$400 a month left out of their take-home pay.

Paygrade L isn't someone just coming out of high school and looking for their first job. These positions require experience, degrees, certifications, and many are promotions from other positions. If surviving on this pay means you have to either live with family or get roommates, not enjoy some relaxing fun once in a while, pinch every penny you can to keep your bills current, and live off the cheapest possible food options, then there's something wrong. According to DHR's CEC report, paygrade L is the largest paygrade with 18.8% of state employees. J-M make up the bulk of the workforce. J and K get paid a good bit less an L and likely would struggle even more than the L employee in this example. M makes enough to start considering a savings, but still not enough for everything those jobs entail.

When you're thinking about the CEC, please think not just about the gross pay or the "total compensation" we get with our benefits package. Please consider the take-home pay that many people are struggling with. 4.5% isn't going to do much to help when the employee cost of insurance and the required PERSI contribution will go up the same amount. 4.5% also won't cover the cost in gas many state employees will have to pay if we're all required to work in the office again rather than telecommuting. 4.5% is also not enough when many agencies refuse to give out "exemplary" reviews to their staff. No one will receive the full amount that way.

I have been a state employee for 6.5 years. It took me 5 of those years to get to paygrade L. While I'm not in the same situation as my example, I'm not far from it. I am a mother of two young children and the breadwinner for our household as my husband is disabled and unable to work. If he did not have a small bit of disability pay, and I didn't have other odd jobs that bring in some income, we would not be able to make ends meet off my pay. We were fortunate to be able to buy a home before the interest rates and home prices completely exploded or else we would not be able to afford a home of our own. Up until this last year, we barely made it paycheck to paycheck let alone being able to think about taking our kids on a family vacation or being prepared for an emergency. The savings from not having to commute from Nampa to Boise every workday has been a huge help to getting us in a better position. Knowing that telecommuting could end means I will have less of my pay I can use for things beyond the bare necessities and this proposed amount is not enough.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Idaho Behavioral Health Plan (IBHP) Governance Bureau – Idaho Dept. of Health & Welfare

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I am reaching out to you as a current mental health clinician for the Department of Health and Welfare. With the current economy, financial pressure has grown to unmanageable proportions. In Idaho, the cost of living has sky rocketed, the population has sky rocketed, and our case load and work demands have been congruent in growth. We are seeing a decrease in morale and mass exit for those who are not feeling

valued or simply are unable to meet the financial demands of cost of living. My personal testimony is that I left a higher paying, supervisory position at a hospital to pursue my dream job and a career with the Department of Health and Welfare. Unfortunately, I took a significant pay cut in doing so, knowing the risk I was taking. I will first and foremost report that I absolutely love my currently position and know that I made the right choice to a job I love and have as my intended career path. However, the risk involving the lower compensation is certainly dictating my future. I am struggling financially to pay for housing and to put food on the table in this economy. I have heard similar experiences from majority of my colleagues, associates and community partners. With your help, we could effectively manage this financial issue which would inevitably have a positive compound effect on the community and services the state provides. An increase in compensation would increase morale, employee retention and satisfaction, and increase staffing and workload manageability. I hope you find my testimony to be motivating and helpful in this process. Thank you so much for your time and regard.

██████████, LMSW

Thanks for the opportunity to comment on the CEC for SFY 24-25.

I have been a state employee for 34 years. I have seen a few things along the way. Know that I have appreciated having a job and that in times of recession that job is secure, even if we have had to give up some hours to keep the state budget balanced or got no raises. Over these years I have observed a few things.

1. The state used to give a small gift for every 5 years as a state employee. I got a DEQ mug at 5, a state pen/pencil set at 10, then a commemorative Idaho silver coin at 15 years of service. They changed the way the gifts were given and one had a few choices then for their every 5 year anniversary. They dropped the every 5 year gift options just before I was eligible for the 20 year gift. They dropped it entirely. With the average life span of a state employee at less than 5 years this seems a really cheap trick to play on employees rather than garnish some good will and appreciation for service. I see it as a slap in the face and could not believe the state was so cheap as to drop this. It has seemed to me that the legislature generally has no clue as to how little things like this foster good will and better work amongst employees, or at least by me. It would be nice to see this re-instated even if I will not benefit from it....
2. I have appreciated the medical coverage the state provides. But you are lacking in one area, hearing aids. Blue cross offers very little in this area and you have to go to specific providers, you can't just choose your own. The savings offered are minimal. You really should get a better deal on this and have like a 80/20 coverage where the employee pays 20% and they pay the rest. Even then this can get rather spendy for 4-6 thousand dollar set of hearing aids. Hearing is essential for work and it would be nice to see much better coverage for this. I actually don't use my state issued phone but forward it to my iPhone as it allows me to Bluetooth directly to my hearing aids and I can hear phone conversations much better.

3. One item over the years has bugged me a bit on how you change position salaries. If one works for 5 years or more and then say the legislature sees that their current position statewide is in need of an adjustment to the range and then they raise the range say by 2 bucks overall. The person that has worked 5 years or more is kept at their current salary instead of being moved up 2 bucks to maintain the level they have achieved. We see this as a demotion and it often means that new employees are then hired in at about the same rate as employees that have been in their job for 5 or more years. This is not the way to improve employee morale. If one has worked up to a certain level, they should keep that level when their job classification gets adjusted. Yes, this means that there will be some that get higher raises than others that year, but it should all work out over time. Others would then get level adjustment raises when those who got them before don't... The current practice makes it about impossible to ever get to mid-range or higher with years of service. We notice things like this and it does not improve morale.
4. Years ago there was a push to get people to mid-range within 5 years at their current position/classification. This has appeared to drop by the wayside. When one looks at most levels there are very few that are at mid-range (with the exception of administration jobs, they seem to do well). This is one reason folks leave or makes it hard to hire with the higher cost of living in the Boise area.... There should be a better balance on this....
5. With inflation, we are going backwards. It was nice to get a bigger raise in previous years but it isn't keeping up with inflation, so our wages are declining in purchasing power. I could not afford to live here now if I didn't already own a house that is now worth about twice as much as I paid for it. Anything less than 5% is again a slap in the face with Idaho doing so well on its budget.... It just seems that over the years the legislature always thinks of its employees last after all other budgets are done. I remember years ago when eastern Idaho got flooded and the first thing the legislature did was cancel our raises that year. First thing! This gets noticed too and makes us feel like we are not important. Work suffers accordingly.... Or it finally leads folks to seek better employment....

And that's pretty much my two bits on the topic. Again, I am thankful I have a job and that I am doing okay for the moment. And many of us wish we would get paid what we are worth, but for some that might mean less than they get now! I have been thankful for all the state and legislature has done for employees, but there are areas lacking that could be improved as I have noted. There may be more, but these are the ones I have noticed over the years....

And note I will be retiring April 30 so will not benefit from anything the legislature does for the CEC, but I finally wanted to let you know about the things that have bothered me and others over the years.... Keep in mind, I do not dwell on the inequities as noted above. If one does it just makes them bitter or upset and I don't choose to live that way. So I set these things aside and just acknowledge this is the way things are and I can't change them and then just focus on the job.....

Thanks again for the opportunity to comment. Here's hoping for a better New Year in 2024!

[REDACTED]

Idaho Department of Environmental Quality

1410 N Hilton St, Boise ID 83706

[REDACTED]

www.deq.idaho.gov/

Dear CEC Committee Members,

I strongly encourage you to adopt DHR's CEC recommendations for this year.

I also recommend you take a cost of living adjustment into consideration and potentially add this to your CEC proposal. As a single parent and proud DHW employee, there are a number of factors that make me want to stay with the department including health insurance and retirement benefits, however, my wages have not kept up with the cost of living and I find myself making budget decisions every month that impact my quality of life and that of my child. I am also the manager of team of 6 from across the state and with potential upcoming changes to the state's telework policy, every member of my team will face an immediate and steep increase to several expenses related to returning to an office from fuel, food and travel time.

In light of those upcoming expenses, I again encourage you to adopt and potentially add to the CEC recommendation from DHR.

I also ask that in coming years you allow more time for employees to submit written testimony, as many will miss their chance this year due to the compressed timeline and the fact we got notice during the holidays.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Idaho Department of Health & Welfare | Division of Behavioral Health

450 W. State St., 3rd Floor | Boise ID 83702

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

CEC Committee,

Thank you in advance for the opportunity to testify in the CEC Committee for the next fiscal year 2024-2025. I am [REDACTED] and my title is Self-Reliance Specialist (SRS) and have been working for the Treasure Valley Processing Center (TVPC) for 9 years and 3 months. I met my 10 year anniversary in CSS hrs on 09/05/2023, my actual anniversary date for my 10 year is 08/25/2024, so I met my 10 years early; a year ahead 😊.

I have never replied to an invitation like this before so I am going to do my best in expressing our hope in CEC changes for every dedicated employee. I have been very fortunate and grateful for the raises that occur each year, but there is always room for improvement. Throughout time and especially during the pandemic, we have demonstrated passion and loyalty to our jobs and in turn we have the opportunity to work from home, which is a great plus in many ways and I love it. I am extremely happy that this was considered to keep on a permanent basis. I have twins that are delayed and allows me to fit in time and in being a part of their development and among other things too, like cutting down on commuting- gas, wear and tear on the vehicles etc, which are all fantastic savings.

Last year, the CEC amount allotted for workers was one of the greater percentages that I have seen since working here; came around at a great time. But now we have the inflation happening, which is a big hardship for many people. We work very hard to maintain a great standing within the state in order to qualify and earn the CEC. To me it is like a wonderful bonus or a savings that I am waiting on to receive each year. I look forward to it more than the taxes. Since I am the breadwinner for my family, the increase in pay is huge for us.

For this year, I do hope that the Legislature takes into consideration the massive changes that we have experienced this past year in terms of food prices, gas etc. and keep the CEC percentage better than what it was last year. In addition to this, I am not sure if what I am about to say has been brought up in the past or not, but it is a very special request. I have been speaking to my supervisor about this and agrees on the terms. We are hoping for some type of merit raise or differential for those of us who are **Bi-lingual Speaking and/or have other specialized skills**. It's difficult to not make comparison's but other locations, including other state agencies and private sectors, do offer these differentials for bi-lingual speakers. In the area that we serve, there is a huge need for this assistance, and in comparing with what an interpreter is paid for per hour is by far nowhere near what we are paid per hour. We are not asking to match this pay (would be nice), but to consider an additional compensation for our skills. Working for the State of Idaho has been a privilege and I enjoy it each day and I would like to maintain my current role or if given the opportunity, work within the state. The work that I do allows me to help Idahoans in times of desperate needs and that is the best satisfaction that one can have. I take pride in my work each and every day and it shows in my yearly reviews that enables me to earn the CEC pay increase, which again, I do appreciate very much.

Apart from my other qualities, the one thing that stands out mostly are my bilingual skills. I enjoy very much making great use of the translations in helping those who do not speak the English language. However, as much as I enjoy what I can bring to the table and how much I am told that I am appreciated, it's still not enough in a sense. The job that we do is very hard and requires a lot of determination, dedication and commitment, which I believe a lot of us do show and provide. The State of Idaho is a desirable place to work for and I am humbled to be a part of this great establishment, but I do believe that

the state can do better in recognizing those of us that have the specialized skills and compensate us in addition to the regular pay increases. The thought of this even being a possibility is such an amazing feeling. Whatever the Legislature decides for this term, surely will be well thought out and to even be considered for raise this year is truly humbling and hoping again to be a part of it.

I am self-taught. I am not trained professional. What I present to you is, speaking from the heart. I do hope that it's enough to help make a difference in some way, not just for myself but for every hardworking state worker. We are living in such uncertain times and every little bit helps.

Thank you again in advance for your time and consideration on this matter

Sincerely,



Self – Reliance Specialist

Division of Self- Reliance



www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov

I would like to provide written testimony to the Change in Employee Compensation Committee.

Earlier this year I left a local hospital after 12 years as a medical social worker. At the time of my departure, I was making \$41/hr. I accepted a position with The Department of Health and Welfare at a compensation rate of \$32/hr. As a single parent, having adopted my son through the Idaho Foster Care System in 2020, competitive compensation and the ability to financially support my family is of high importance to me. I was willing to accept a lower rate of pay as the position with H&W is more flexible than my previous job which allows me to meet my son's special needs more easily (weekly appointments, mental health support etc.); however, the dramatic change in compensation has required significant changes to our lifestyle and budget. We also recently moved, downsizing from a 2200sq foot home to a 900sq foot duplex in order to lower monthly housing costs. The rate of \$32/hr. for a position requiring a master's degree and the highest level of licensure in the field (LCSW) is not only not competitive, it is not in line with the median community compensation rate. Additionally, with the current pay structure, I am not compensated for years of experience (I have been in the field for 12 years). At a rate of \$32/hr, I would not be able to support my family without the monthly adoption stipend I receive as well as Medicaid benefits for my son. Some months, even with these adoption benefits, I am unable to fully meet our needs, and rely on assistance from family.

I would kindly ask that the CEC request a significant increase in compensation to align with competitive market rates.

[REDACTED]
Clinician, Region IV Designated Evaluation Team

Idaho Department of Health and Welfare
[REDACTED]

Good morning,

Below are my comments for the Change in Employee Compensation (CEC) Committee. The below comments are also duplicated in a formal memo attached to this email. I appreciate the Committee's outreach allowing me to share my thoughts regarding CEC and I look forward to changes to the state's personnel system and employee compensation being discussed.

As a state of Idaho employee and supervisor, employee compensation is a critical factor for both myself and my employees when considering Idaho as a place to call home.

The cost of living in Idaho continues to rise. While previous CECs have been helpful and appreciated, they continue to lag behind rising costs. As a younger professional, I will continue employment where I believe I can start a family. As a supervisor pay grade in the public sector of Idaho, it is looking less likely that I will be able to start my family here because of the cost of housing. Another concern I have is the prospect of promotion. While I strive to attain my career goals and increase my responsibilities within my agency, I am concerned about my ability to accept promotional opportunities. My next career step would require me to work in Boise, where I am unable to afford housing even with promotional pay. The idea of refusing a job promotion because I cannot afford housing at a new work location is heart wrenching but something that continues to weigh on me. This is compounded with the difficulties it is to allow hybrid work as a state of Idaho employee, whereas other states like Washington and Oregon it is easily attainable and encouraged, helping ease the cost of living issues. These hardships are true for myself and my employees who struggle to find affordable housing close to their current work. All of my employees commute 45 minutes to work because of this, and none of us are homeowners. Housing costs increased exponentially over the last decade all across the state, and increased CECs are crucial to allow young and new state employees like myself the opportunity to afford to make Idaho our home and continue working here.

Also, CECs are crucial to employee retention. Idaho lags behind other Mountain West states in competitive public sector wages. The argument is made that the cost of living in Washington, Oregon and Utah are

higher, thus requiring increased wages. But, their wages when adjusted for the increased cost of living and tax structures continue to outpace Idaho. Other Mountain West states such as Wyoming have lower cost of living and higher wages for public sector employees. My agency has a large vacancy rate due to hardships attracting and retaining qualified individuals from leaving to other states. As a supervisor, my office is currently 50% staffed due to hiring and retention difficulties, and employees are required to increase their workload to make up for this deficit causing an increase in employee burnout. Increased CECs will help retain our employees while also increasing Idaho's ability to compete with other Mountain West states offering higher wages and increased standard of living.

The prospect of continuing to live and work in Idaho dwindles due to my current pay. As a management level employee, it is unacceptable that I am unable to afford current housing, unable to accept future promotion opportunities, and unable to retain my employees. CECs are needed in order for public employees to continue choosing Idaho as a place to thrive and start a family, not just as a place to barely make it by until something better comes along. I appreciate the committee's outreach allowing me to share my thoughts and concerns.

Sincerely,



CEC Committee,

Thank you for your efforts to thoughtfully analyze and appropriate funding for state employees. I appreciate Idaho's fiscally responsible approach to government. I liked last year's idea to implement a \$1.20 merit based increase which resulted in a more substantial increase percentage wise for those in lower pay grades than those in the higher pay grades. The past two years have been difficult with the cost of groceries up 20% and other essentials an average of 13%. Past CEC changes that improved state employees purchasing power have been more than wiped out by inflation. We need a significant increase for all state employees.

As a supervisor that works in the Healthcare category I can certainly substantiate the challenge it is to hire and retain talented employees who can be compensated at a much high rate in the private sector. This is not unique to Nursing and I would urge you to consider frequently used Behavioral Health classifications such as Clinician and Human Service Program Specialist. Many licensed mental health professionals have left state employment the past few years for the private sector and it is extremely challenging to meet the basic court ordered work and serve the most vulnerable members of our society let alone implement the other ideas recommended by the Idaho Behavioral Health Council.

I appreciate the extremely difficult work by those in Public Safety and the necessary increases being made there but I can't help thinking that if we meet people's Behavioral Health needs more effectively that Public Safety's work would be much easier. An important part of meeting those needs is retaining state employees who by law serve as the Behavioral Health Authority. Behavioral Health employees are highly educated and well trained. We know we will likely never be compensated the same as some of our peers in healthcare but I'm writing to advocate for the talented Behavioral Health professionals around me who have passed up more lucrative opportunities to serve Idaho's most vulnerable individuals. Thanks for your consideration!

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

421 Memorial Dr. Pocatello, ID

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

December 27, 2023

Change in Employee Compensation (CEC) Committee

I am [REDACTED], a native Idahoan with roots tracing back to the early settlers of Power and Lemhi Counties, predating Idaho's statehood. Since 1990, my wife and I have made District 32 our home. Throughout this time, I've been a dedicated employee of the Department of Environmental Quality, specializing in compliance matters related to the Idaho National Laboratory (INL). Meanwhile, my wife, Cathy, has built her career in secondary education, primarily within District 91, focusing on business /computer technology and physical education. We both proudly graduated from Idaho State University.

Together, we've raised two sons who, despite our encouragement, have forged their own careers in the private sector, away from eastern Idaho. Our experiences have provided us with valuable insights into the evolving landscape and challenges facing our community. While the intrinsic rewards of our professions endure, the financial strain on young and middle-aged families in most parts of Idaho is undeniable. Purchasing a home and starting a family has become a formidable task, reminiscent of the challenges faced in the 1880s.

Critics may label us as imprudent for not veering into more lucrative paths, such as joining the workforce at INL. However, it's an indisputable fact, not merely a personal belief, that our contributions to the state, community, and individuals we've interacted with over the past three decades have been substantial, albeit not always adequately compensated. Despite the trend of many coworkers leaving for private sector opportunities with substantial pay increases, we've chosen to remain, navigating increased workloads without corresponding pay adjustments. As I approach the twilight of my state career, I continue to find fulfillment in serving the people of Idaho.

In light of my experiences, I offer the following recommendations for the benefit of my fellow and future state employees and educators, aiming to establish a robust continuity of mission execution and a commitment to a prosperous future for the state:

1. **Reinstate Longevity Pay Increases:** To enhance employee retention, consider reinstating longevity pay increases at a rate of 5% per 5 years of service.
2. **Adjust Leave Accrual Rates:** Instead of focusing solely on pay increases, contemplate adjusting leave accrual rates, allowing top levels of 8 hours per pay period and a total of 400 accrued hours for employees with over 20 years of service.
3. **Explore a 4-Day Work Week:** Consider transitioning to a 4-day work week without any reduction in pay and benefits.
4. **Implement Realistic Cost of Living Increases:** Whenever feasible, consider realistic cost of living increases in addition to benefit adjustments.
5. **Align Pay Rates with Private Sector Standards:** Be proactive in aligning pay rates and scales with prevailing private sector wages to ensure fair compensation.

These recommendations, rooted in practical experience and a commitment to the well-being of Idaho's workforce, aim to foster a supportive environment for state employees and educators.

[REDACTED],

Idaho Falls, District 32.

Employee Compensation Committee,

My name is [REDACTED], I serve as the [REDACTED] for the Idaho Department of Education. I am writing to express my appreciation for the work this committee is doing in order to assure that state employee wages are competitive in Idaho.

Having worked in my current position for nearly two years I have found great fulfillment in my role. However, I believe it is important for this committee to continue to review state agency wages and make adjustments as needed in order to attract and retain great employees.

Allow me to provide some context for my specific position. In my last year of teaching (2022) within the West Ada School District, my take home pay was \$52,783. This year, as the Idaho Department of Education's Science and ISAS Coordinator, my take-home pay is

\$54,026. While most benefits remain comparable, I have observed a rise in out-of-pocket expenses for specialist visits, such as those related to allergies and dermatology. Whether this change is a result of a universal adjustment with Blue Cross or part of the state's chosen insurance package is unclear.

Recently, a Science Coordinator position was advertised within the Boise School District with a salary of \$114,000. Comparatively, Coordinators in West Ada, operating on a 205-day schedule, commence at \$90,975. For perspective, my gross salary for the past year amounted to \$79,399. Given these figures, I believe it is not unreasonable to assert that coordinators at the state level should receive compensation on par with, if not exceeding, our counterparts in larger districts across Idaho.

Competitive wages are pivotal in securing and retaining top-tier talent. It is my hope that through your attention and consideration we can work towards implementing adjustments that reflect the dedication and expertise demanded by positions at the state level.

Thank you for your commitment to the well-being of our state employees. I'm grateful for your time and consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



[Redacted signature]

Idaho Department of Education
Superintendent Debbie Critchfield

[Redacted contact information]
sde.idaho.gov



Dear Ms. Otto,

Our state workforce plays a vital role in ensuring the smooth operation of government services and, consequently, has a direct impact on the well-being of Idaho's citizens. Below are some key reasons why investing in competitive salaries and benefits for state of Idaho employees is not only beneficial to them, but also advantageous for the citizens of our great state and the overall functioning of government operations:

- **Employee Retention and Job Satisfaction:** DEQ and other state agencies have identified employee engagement as a major contributing factor to workplace success and employee retention. Competitive compensation and benefits packages contribute significantly to employee satisfaction and retention.
- **Competitive Recruitment:** In recent years, state agencies such as DEQ have continued to experience recruitment difficulty and high turnover, in part, due to the high cost of living relative to state salaries. Offering competitive salaries and benefits helps attract top talent, allowing the state to recruit the best candidates for key positions, and keep those employees long term.
- **Quality of Public Services:** Well-compensated employees are more likely to be motivated and dedicated to their roles, resulting in improved service to the citizens of Idaho. Whereas, the resulting stable and experienced workforce ensures continuity in government services and enhances institutional knowledge.
- **Economic Impact:** The increased cost of living in Idaho has placed an additional financial burden on our state employees. Competitive salaries and benefits become even more crucial to help employees meet the rising costs of housing, utilities, healthcare, and other essential expenses. Further, competitive salaries empower state employees to contribute to the local economies, supporting businesses and communities across Idaho.
- **Government Efficiency and Effectiveness:** Finally, the financial strain on state employees is affecting their morale and, consequently, the quality and efficiency of public services. Appropriate compensation is a key factor in maintaining a motivated and dedicated workforce that can deliver top-notch services to citizens of Idaho.

In light of these factors, I urge you to prioritize and advocate for policies that address the financial challenges faced by our state employees. It is crucial to ensure that their compensation aligns with the current economic landscape, including the increased cost of living and inflationary pressures.

Thank you for your dedication to the well-being of our state and its citizens. Your support will have a positive and lasting impact on the lives of our state employees and the communities they serve.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
1410 N. Hilton

Boise, ID 83706

[REDACTED]
www.deq.idaho.gov/

Our mission: To protect human health and the quality of Idaho's air, land, and water.

Hello legislators,

I appreciate the work you do for us and all your constituents so I will keep this brief.

The State is lacking compensation that encourages long-term employment within a position. Subject matter experts are the State's most valuable asset on public works. Within the civil engineering discipline there are modelers, drafters, inspectors, surveyors, project managers, and many others that are key components to successful projects. Experts in these areas take years of experience to build, but the errors they catch, the time they save, and the mentorship they provide are worth their cost every single time. Currently it feels the only way to somewhat match the financial lifestyle of our private sector counterparts is to take roles that are primarily supervisory. These supervisor positions often don't have room produce technical engineering deliverables that are crucial for projects.

I do not want to starve the private industry of work; the problem is these consultants are often overloaded as well which can pose very real safety and economic threats. The state is a great place to work that has benefits recognized and appreciated across the industry. If we can make positions that reflect how the private sector is organized and can be somewhat competitive in pay, I think we very well could have some of the brightest minds and highest cost savings in the nation. Thank you for your time and consideration.

[REDACTED]

Idaho was once a very affordable place to live but unfortunately that is no longer the case. I'm single and very careful with my spending. And while the State benefits are very good, the pay is not.

We need to see a significant increase in hourly pay. I enjoy what I do, however I must keep my eyes open for a better opportunity. No one wants to live check to check.

We cannot entice good candidates at the pay rates we are offering. And obviously it's hard to keep many of the jobs filled full time when day-to-day expenses are on the rise constantly. Please vote yes on the 4.5% as presented in the HR report and with your help, continue to increase State wages so our vital State workers are compensated appropriately, and the pay becomes competitive with the private sector.

Thank you.



Shipping and Receiving Materials Handler, Idaho Department of Administration



Web: www.adm.idaho.gov



Willard Boise,

ID

Change in Employee Compensation Committee

Dear Members of the Change in Employee Compensation Committee,

I write to you today as an employee of the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, but I want to be clear that I am expressing my personal thoughts and concerns, not speaking on behalf of the Department.

One significant issue we face within our organization is wage compression based on longevity. It has become apparent that many long-serving employees, who have dedicated years to their roles, are not being adequately compensated for their experience and commitment. Recently hired employees are often making close to the same amount as those of us with ten years or more working in the same position. This situation can be demoralizing and doesn't seem fair to those of us who have invested substantial time in our careers here.

The gap between private and public sector wages is a matter of concern. Many of us recognize that we could potentially earn significantly more in the private sector with our skills and experience. This wage disparity not only makes it challenging to retain current employees but also hinders our ability to attract new talent to join our team.

Our department is currently grappling with a staffing shortage, particularly in essential positions responsible for providing crucial services to our community. This shortage has led to increased workloads

for those of us who remain, causing stress and making it challenging to maintain the quality of our work.

The existing compensation structure and high workloads contribute to a sense of burnout among our colleagues. Burnout not only affects job satisfaction but also compromises the quality of care and services we provide to the people we serve. It's becoming increasingly difficult to keep up with the demands of our roles.

High employee turnover is a growing concern within our organization. Dedicated and skilled employees are leaving the Department, often due to financial concerns, despite their commitment to our mission. This continual loss of talent disrupts our teams and further strains those of us who stay.:

I want to emphasize that allowing employees to work from home significantly improves our work-life balance. Commuting can be time-consuming, costly, and stressful, and working from home can help reduce these challenges. It would also provide more flexibility in managing our personal and professional lives, contributing to better job satisfaction and overall well-being.

In conclusion, I respectfully urge the Change in Employee Compensation Committee to consider these personal concerns as you review the current compensation structure. Addressing these issues is vital to retaining and attracting skilled individuals who are essential to our mission's success. It's crucial to create a fair and competitive compensation system, bridge the gap between public and private sector wages,

alleviate staffing shortages, reduce burnout, and stem the tide of employee turnover. Additionally, embracing remote work options could be a valuable step toward achieving a healthier work-life balance for all employees.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

U

To whom this may concern,

My Name is [REDACTED]. I am an employee with the state of Idaho, in the child support division. I believe pay increase should grow past 3% increase due to the inflation and cost of living. Many state employees are searching for second jobs, myself as well. Being a single mom with two teenage boys at home is hard already as it is. But if I were to have to find a second job, just to be able to afford groceries, would be even harder. I love my job and would never want to have to find different employment because I am not making enough to survive.

I'm grateful for the chance to be able to write this letter and for employees to be heard. I hope this gets the attention that is needed for us to continue to love and enjoy our jobs and not live with the worry of being able to survive with all the economical growth here in Idaho.

To whom it may concern;

I am writing in regards to the solicited testimony on the Change in Employee Compensation.

To be blunt, state employees should be able to afford to live in the state we work in. Prices of everything – from fuel to food to housing – have increased exponentially in the last three years – but our pay has not. It's imperative that the state compensate their employees appropriately in response to the rising cost of living. It is widely accepted that the younger employed generations will never be able to afford purchasing a house in the Treasure Valley area, but now they are also being priced out of rental opportunities. Idaho is growing too quickly for employees' compensation to catch up. Furthermore, the state as an employment agency will not be able to compete with private corporations on hiring practices if the pay is not competitive. No one wants to work a complete work week and still not have enough to live on.

I strongly encourage this committee to take a long look at the real cost of living for the average Idahoan. Don't look at national averages or projected numbers. Ask real people from all demographics and locations in Idaho to get a real understanding of what we are struggling to afford. My hope would be that committee will see that compensation for state employees must be competitive and act accordingly.

Regards,



[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Idaho Department of Education
Superintendent Debbie Critchfield

[Redacted]

sde.idaho.gov



Good afternoon,

As a new employee of the Department of Health & Welfare, I am writing this email in support of the critical work my colleagues and I do each day. We provide an unmatched benefit to our state, at times work very long hours, and miss time with our loved ones. Please consider the recommendation(s) that was made and assist the people who are employed by our great state to help you.

Thank you,

[Redacted]

Human Resource Business Partner III
Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

Region 4 - Westgate

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Good afternoon Christine,

Please consider my comments below regarding changes to the CEC's employee compensation considerations.

Dear Change in Employee Compensation Committee (CEC),

Each new legislative season provides an opportunity to consider increasing Idaho state employee compensation wages. Cost-of-living adjustments are necessary to ensure that employees' purchasing power remains local and consistent in the face of inflation and rising living expenses. As the cost of goods and services continues to increase, it is important to provide pay increases to help state employees keep up with the exponential rising cost of living. It is essential for state workers to be able to afford necessities such as housing, utilities, food, transportation, and healthcare. Furthermore, employees with growing families, including those with special needs children, injured, and/or elderly family members, are burdened with added costs such as childcare or elderly care, and added or unanticipated medical expenses.

By providing cost-of-living adjustments, the state can demonstrate their commitment to the well-being of their employees and ensure that they are able to maintain a good quality of life. This can also help to improve employee morale and retention, as employees will feel valued and appreciated for their hard work. Demonstrating this level of commitment can also aid to increase employee engagement and play a critical role in employee recruitment and retention. When the cost of living rises, it becomes more challenging for employees to maintain their standard of living without a corresponding increase in their wages. This can lead to dissatisfaction and potentially prompt employees to seek alternative job opportunities.

Furthermore, failing to provide cost-of-living adjustments can lead to financial strain for employees, which can ultimately impact their productivity, overall job satisfaction, as well as health and well-being. It is in the best interest of the state to provide fair and reasonable pay increases to help employees keep pace with the increasing cost of living. By providing cost of living increases, the state can demonstrate their commitment to supporting the financial well-being of their employees. It also sends a message to employees that their contributions are valued and that the state is willing to ensure that employee wages keep pace with the changing economic landscape.

Overall, cost-of-living adjustments are a necessary and fair way to ensure that employees can maintain their standard of living in the face of economic changes. It is important for the state to regularly review and adjust salaries to reflect the *true cost* of living in their area. In addition, cost of living increases can be a crucial factor in both attracting and retaining top talent, as employees are more likely to remain loyal and

committed to an organization that recognizes and addresses their financial needs. Therefore, it is in the best interest of the CEC to consider cost of living adjustments as part of their recruitment and retention strategies.

Thank you and respectfully,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Idaho Department of Environmental Quality



[REDACTED]
Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
1410 N. Hilton St., Boise, ID 83706

[REDACTED]



To Whom This May Concern,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am currently apart of the Legal Action Team within the Child Support Department. I appreciate your time and willingness to hear out each state employee that submits one of these letters. I want to point out that while the data that was gathered and put together is well thought out; the 100+ pages of research that was gathered does seem extensive for those that do not specialize in the field. I understand trying to be open with your employees but where an individual whose main job is to gather this information but for another as myself who spends at least 40 hours a week with my job with the state, I do not have time to go through all this data collection and try to ensure that I am

also informed. If a suggestion may be made that there is a shortened version of this provided in the future, it would be much appreciated; as for the timing of this since the data was released during Holiday times there are many employees who are taking time off to spend with their loved ones who will not have a chance to write a letter to the CEC or get time to read through the reports. If this information could be provided earlier in December to allow adequate time for employees to respond; it may allow for more state employee voices to be heard.

A couple of things as to why I believe why a pay increase should continue to grow past just a 3% increase and the growing merit-based increase is the growing economy especially here in Idaho, turn over rate, and the potential of telework coming to an end. Based off the most recent pay raise I was roughly receiving only an extra \$105 per check. This now a days is maybe a gas of tank and partial groceries. While a raise is always appreciated as a young adult looking to buy a house, be able to have a steady future, and look into starting a family; the raise received this past year does make an individual feel the need to search out an additional job to have a chance to compete with today's market. There are multiple employees I know within the department that are having to do side jobs to make ends meet. With a proper raise the state could hope to see an increase in morale and retentiveness if workers were not having to worry if their main job would be covering all the bills.

On 1/20/2023 Dave Jeppesen had announced that the Health and Welfare turnover rate slightly improved in the state Fiscal Year 2021-2022 from 21.7% to 18.7%. I was reading over Appendix F: Turnover Data that the state experienced a slight decrease from Fiscal year 2022-2023 from 21.8% to 18.9%. If the goal is to still get this number down to 14% as previously mentioned by Jeppesen then it appears we went up 0.2% in turnover rate. In the FY23 Exit Interview Data that was gathered 24.86% rated pay as the most important factor. As state employees we are consistently working for every family and individual that resides within our state; but when all the hard work is not reciprocated with recognition that the employees deserve better pay could be why they are seeking new jobs with that better pay.

Recently notification was sent out from Monica Young that an update to Telework is coming; they did not provide many details and advise that we do not worry. Sending out these update does cause worry and one of the main concerns is now that the money that was no longer being spent on travel costs will be put back into place if we are to return to the office. Referencing back to that rough difference of \$105 a check means my most recent “raise” would be applied towards filling up my tank just to make it to my job with the state. Telework has been a blessing to finding that work life balance and the elimination of that could lead to burnt out employees who are not seeing their “raise” as acceptable and turnover rate increasing. If state employees are to return to the office even more reason to ensure that our upcoming raise is worth the time of the employees that are there helping the departments within Idaho run efficiently for the families/individuals of this state.

I appreciate your time for reading this,

[REDACTED]

TO: Senator Kevin Cook, Representative Matthew Bundy, Senator Jim Guthrie, Representative James Holtzclaw, Senator Van T. Burtenshaw, Representative Mike Kingsley, Senator Cindy J. Carlson, Representative Josh Wheeler, Senator Janie Ward-Engelking, and Representative John Gannon

FROM: [REDACTED], Idaho Resident 20-ish years, State Employee 3-ish month

Subject: Change in Employee Compensation

- I. **Introduction and Summary:** You guys are being asked to evaluate the efficiency of our tax dollars, and your reports are meaningless. The truth is we need you to set the standard. We need you to be the baseline, the thing we can compare “good”/”bad” jobs to. If the state is barely paying better than the bottom 25% within the entire Northwest Region of the United States, then that means they are barely better than Jackson’s convenience store, for reference I was paid \$15.50 there.
- II. **Situation:** The Change in Employee Compensation Committee has been given erroneous arbitrarily aggregated data that serves to placate the status quo while degrading and diminishing the quality of life for all citizens and their children within the state of Idaho.
- III. **Mission:** Convince the Committee to set the official standard for employment in Idaho. You, the

Change in Employee Compensation Committee, are responsible for setting the standard for the “Cost of Labor” in this state. You could use your report, which compare and contrasts our standards to all the other states within our region. Or you could:

- A. Accurately evaluate the cost of living within your communities,
- B. Project/hypothesize potential changes and their costs,
- C. And then choose the most efficient processes that will result in Continuous Process Improvement.

IV. Execution: Define the cost of labor in the state of Idaho for fiscal year 2025. Establish, or find, a formula for accurately calculating the cost of living for each citizen within the state of Idaho. Not all expense reports are the same, so to accurately calculate the cost of living one must differentiate between “surviving,” “living,” and “thriving”. In doing so, we will set boundaries that allow for rapid adaptation to the process without obliterating long-term progress. According to the Declaration of Independence, each human in the United States has the Rights to Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness; so, we will use these as the primary metrics for establishing a “Cost of Life” formula. The following are the formulas a version of the formulas for calculating “Cost of Survival” “Cost of Living” and the “Cost of Thriving” within the state of Idaho, using this [Cost of Living Calculator](#):

- A. Cost of Survival (Right to Life, one must earn the rest), for one 18+ Idahoan: The amount of money it takes to get from one year to the next with only the bare necessities as defined by Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (assuming they don’t drive, have medical needs, or children):
 - 1. Physiological Needs: Food, Shelter, Clothing (per year)
 - a. Food: ~\$4,686 (assuming all food prepared at home, and bought at the lowest price point available)
 - b. Shelter: ~\$9,366 (based on the HUD’s Fair Market Rent estimates)
 - c. Clothing: ~\$4,596 (including cleaning, maintaining, and personal care items)
 - 2. Safety and Security Needs:
 - a. Taxes: ~\$4,812
 - 3. Total Cost to Survive in Idaho: ~\$23,460

- B. Cost of Living (Right to Liberty, one is not free if they are not free to move), for one 18+ Idahoan: The amount of money it takes one person to not only survive, but also establish a process for pursuing happiness while building credit and work-history:
1. Cost of Survival Plus:
 - a. Medical: ~\$2,631
 - b. Transportation: ~\$5,316
 - c. Civic: ~\$2,920
 2. Total Cost of Living in Idaho: ~\$34,459
- C. Cost of Thriving (Right to the Pursuit of Happiness, the world is what you make it with the money you earn through service and production), one 18+ Idahoan: The amount of money it would take to fund a traditional American Nuclear Family (married, one parent working full time, w/2.5 kids) within the state of Idaho:
1. Food: 1 Child ~\$10,702 | 2 Children ~\$13,802 | 3 Children ~\$16,795
 2. Child Care: 1 Child ~\$0 | 2 Children ~\$0 | 3 Children ~\$0
 3. Medical: 1 Child ~\$9,144 | 2 Children ~\$9,070 | 3 Children ~\$9,223
 4. Housing: 1 Child ~\$13,372 | 2 Children ~\$13,372 | 3 Children ~\$18,836
 5. Transportation: 1 Child ~\$11,691 | 2 Children ~\$14,058 | 3 Children ~\$15,073
 6. Civic: 1 Child ~\$6,480 | 2 Children ~\$8,835 | 3 Children ~\$7,025
 7. Personal Care: 1 Child ~\$9,463 | 2 Children ~\$10,386 | 3 Children ~\$11,617
 8. Taxes: 1 Child ~\$9,946 | 2 Children ~\$12,110 | 3 Children ~\$14,373
 9. Totals: 1 Child ~\$70,929 | 2 Children ~\$81,764 | 3 Children ~\$93,074
- D. As the largest employer in the state, the State of Idaho is responsible for setting the standard cost of labor in the state. In this instance, the adage “Reap what you sow, so you know what you grow” applies literally. If you don’t pay for the traditional American Nuclear Family, then you CANNOT complain that it no longer exists, and you CANNOT complain that your children no longer believe in the America you refuse to pay for.
- E. The only way to effect change is to set the standard via actionable/enforceable policy. To adjust the minimum wage is to pass the blame. To adjust the value of state employees, equal to the cost of the traditional American Nuclear Family, is to tell all other employers that you actually care about your employees. To do this without exacerbating taxes or take from the top earners, policy must be written in such a way that Entry-level employees have a pre-determined roadmap to earning more based on services rendered and time in service, with clear benchmarks for success.
- F. Based on the Table below, we can clearly see that less than half of all state employees can afford to be a traditional family (one earner, one homemaker and one child), and only 21 can afford to be a traditional American Nuclear Family (one earner, one homemaker, and 2.5 children). This is a direct metric to determine how much you, the Idaho Representatives and Senators, actually value the traditional American Nuclear Family.
- G. Below is your current breakdown of Gross Pay and “Total” Pay, by employee’s tier. Please note, “total” pay is a grossly negligent valuation of (employee benefits + gross pay).
1. Employee Benefits include a Retirement package that requires continuous investment from the employee and five years of minimum service to become vested, and doesn’t result in full payment without at least 25 years of service,

2. all of that is meaningless cause the number falsely assumes an individual would ever receive both in a calendar year. At most an employee with 25 years of continued service, assuming they retire at 65 and die by 83, that one employee, would receive 18 years of pay without labor. (Which is why employee pay into retirement, making it a self-sustaining system, assuming politicians don't loot and gamble with it; see social security).

		Idaho Employees			
Grade	Avg Tenure in years	Number of Employees	Percent of Employees	Idaho Current Average Gross Pay	"Total" Pay (Assumed Comp after 25 yrs of service, added to annual salary)
T	29.6				
R	19	1	0.0%	\$164,507	\$224,941
Q (COL married parent of 3)		4	0.1%	\$142,620	\$199,015
P	13.9				
	13.2	16	0.2%	\$127,236	\$180,046
O	12.4	187	2.3%	\$106,962	\$154,968
N	11.2	195	2.4%	\$94,950	\$140,052
M (COL married parent of 1)		580	7.3%	\$83,658	\$125,962
L	9.3				
	8.7	1194	15.0%	\$74,761	\$114,860
K	6.5	1503	18.8%	\$65,644	\$103,484
J	7.5	1012	12.7%	\$58,108	\$94,081
I	6.5	1352	16.9%	\$52,068	\$86,543
H	5.3	736	9.2%	\$45,539	\$78,397
G (TRS-2)	3.9	875	11.0%	\$41,476	\$73,326
D (+2)	0.9	203	2.5%	\$39,103	\$70,365
F (-1) (COL single person)		2	0.0%	\$37,024	\$67,771
E (-2)	4.7				
		120	1.5%	\$33,716	\$63,643
Totals		7986		\$74,989	
		6	0.1%	\$32,445	\$62,283

H. G (TRS-2) is where I currently sit within your pay hierarchy. I'm a 30 year old married father of one, if I wasn't a disabled veteran I would still be living with my parents. Because you have failed to set a standard cost of labor in Idaho, large corporations have taken advantage of your citizens and continued pay sub-poverty wages, all while looking better than State Employment. It's embarrassing. I served this nation and by extension this state, but I am a second-class citizen to private equity, who came in and throttle the housing market, making this the third time in my life that the bar for purchasing a house has been once again raised out of my grasp. All the while, you are getting reports that say your pay scales are "fair and equitable" or "conservative and competitive". We need you to actually research this issue, not just this year but every year. We need you to track the market, and ensure that the state is a beacon of reason and good order.

V. **Admin & Logistics:** Write a pay structure that mirrors the military, where most people are only expected to stay 4-5 years and those jobs allow for transition, then create an officer corps pay structure that accommodates specialized education and the costs that come with that education. You can literally set the standard to the highest earners are the most essential workers, and everyone else makes enough to support their families. This demonstrates to everyone: it pays to be invaluable, but you are still valuable in the State of Idaho.

VI. **Command & Signal:** By the people, for the people, of the people.

Respectfully, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

Division of Licensing and Certification

Bureau of Facility Standards

FSB@dhw.idaho.gov

[REDACTED]

Dear CEC Committee,

I am proud to be an Idahoan and work for this amazing State. I thoroughly enjoy serving the citizens of Idaho and working with other agencies to provide GIS support, recommendations and moving forward with our teams' mission, vision, and goals. Most of Idaho has seen a surge in the following costs: housing, food, and gas. It can be very difficult if my family has health issues to have to make a choice between my career or my family. The prices of essential items are increasing dramatically. With the severe inflation we have seen and the thousands of new residents moving here from places that have a higher income level it makes it impossible for the state employees to afford to live here in this beautiful state. There are so many hardworking IT professionals that provide service throughout our state, who would greatly benefit and appreciate your consideration of DHR's recommendation for Fiscal Year 2025.

I greatly appreciate your time.

Respectfully,
[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
11331 W Chinden Blvd, Suite B201

Boise, ID 83714
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

CEC Committee,

I am a lifelong Idahoan. Born and raised. My sons are 5th generation Idahoans. I am a career state employee. I have been in my current, professional position for over twenty years.

At no point during my career with the state have I been fairly compensated. In fact, it actually costs me to work for the state. I do NOT live lavishly, quite frugally in fact. I work full time for the state but am forced to rely on my personal credit to get from one pay period to the next. I maximize my take home pay by minimizing my tax withholdings. This of course creates a tax bill for me at tax time. Last year my Idaho tax bill was over \$800, apparently my fee for working a state job. I can no longer afford to contribute to my Choice 401k. My housing costs are nearly 50% of my monthly salary and I can't find even a studio apartment anywhere in Ada County for less than what I'm paying now. Until very recently the *governor's housing stipend* was more than I make in a year!

As an employee of the state of Idaho, I feel **unvalued** and **cheated**. There is no reason the state of Idaho cannot take care of their professional, career employees appropriately and fairly. It's not because you can't, it's because you won't. Looking back over my career with the state, there have been many years where state employees have received no CEC increases (none, zero). Case in point, the period 2008-2012. All state employees made sacrifices during that tough time (and others), but it's never been made up. It's this type of **inaction** and **indifference** of the legislature, that causes me to characterize my career with the state as a mistake. I feel **used** and **cheated**.

I'm sure the governor and the legislature would argue that the state is not in the business of employing people. I'm sure if it were possible, the state government would be just the governor and the legislature. But that is not possible. State employees are vital and essential to the success of our state and the efficiency our government. They'll point to the pension and the health insurance as these amazing perks that somehow make up for the inept wages. But the reality is, when I start drawing the pension it might be just enough to buy health insurance and little else.

I implore you to make a difference in the lives of your career employees. Tax rebates and reductions are great and welcomed. But it's not enough. Please take care of us by **increasing wages** among your longtime and loyal employees.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
State Historic Preservation Office

[REDACTED]
210 Main Street
Boise, ID 83702

Hello,

I would like to submit the following as my statement to the CEC Committee in regard to employee compensation along with data from the ALICE Report (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed or what is also known as the “working poor”) as linked below.

In short, it is expected that the public sector will always fall behind the private sector in terms of employee compensation. That said, as identified in the ALICE Report, “of Idaho's 681,926 households in 2021, 11% earned below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), 32% were ALICE, in households that earned above the FPL but not enough to afford the basics in the communities where they live [so] **together, 43% of households in Idaho were below the ALICE Threshold** (poverty + ALICE divided by total households)”.

Based on the data presented in the ALICE report we can deduce that both the private and public sectors are failing to adequately compensate the workers of Idaho. This begs the question of what is the future of the State? The families that fall within the ALICE threshold do not qualify for public or other assistance yet cannot afford the basics like housing, childcare, healthcare, education, and more. For this Committee’s consideration, it does not make sense for the State or any employer to only invest in the work being done and not invest in the workers doing the actual work.

Personally, while my family is financially stable, I am still impacted by the consequences of an under-compensated State workforce. **We have multiple dedicated, hardworking staff in our Division alone who hold additional jobs to their State jobs to make ends meet. Furthermore, we have lost quality talent to the private sector and worse, lost talent to other public entities at the city and county levels due to inadequate compensation.** Additionally, this issue impacts the quality of the State's work and the quality of staff that work at the State.

Thank you for your time and your consideration on this very important matter.

ALICE Report Overview: <https://www.unitedforalice.org/state-overview/idaho>

ALICE Report Consequences: <https://www.unitedforalice.org/consequences>

Kind regards,

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Department of Administration, State of Idaho



5-Second Customer Satisfaction Survey: [Rate Us!](#)

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Web: www.dpw.idaho.gov

To whom it may concern,

I have been an employee of the State of Idaho for over 8 years. I believe employee compensation is more important than ever for Behavioral Health. It has long been a concern that state pay structures cannot compete with community provider pay, yet state employees are tasked with supporting the most vulnerable populations across the state. As our population has grown and our cost of living has increased, it has been difficult for me and many others to continue to do the work we do while still maintaining our own households. I believe that the work we do is valuable, needed, and important and that the employees of the State of Idaho deserve to meet their own needs while they support others in our community. I believe that an increase in pay not only allows us to work more effectively but reflects the value of the services we provide. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

Clinician, Designated Examiner

Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

Region IV Behavioral Health

1720 N. Westgate Drive, Ste. A-1

Boise, ID 83704

E- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

To Whom it May Concern:

We have been asked to provide written testimony in regards to the Change in Employee Compensation. My first inclination is to ask why would this not be a given, and is it necessary for State employees to, in layman terms, "beg". However, I need to step outside of my box to explain why, for me, it's important to receive the compensation.

My tenure with the State has been over seven years. I started as a receptionist, working my way up to my current position as a coordinator. To become a coordinator, one of the requirements is to have a bachelor's degree or higher. This feat was accomplished in December of 2022. Not only am I a single mom of three boys, and have been for many years, I worked full-time, as a State employee, during the busiest time of year for our department, while attending school as a full-time student, completing 15 credits in the Fall of 2022 to graduate Cum Laude. Due to my hard work throughout these years, it was the promotions that has afforded me the ability to take care of my children. I say afford loosely as the CEC compensation has not been enough to combat the rise in my rental costs; the gas prices, commuting 45 miles one way and the inflation of being able to feed my children. I say afford loosely as I cannot afford everything for my children on my salary alone, and I now work a second job and have been doing so for almost a year. Yes, a second job.

My boys and I live a very modest life. They have what they need, but that's due to two jobs and hard work. I love what I do, and I am proud to say I work for the State. However, what I feel the State is providing is an investment in my future, but not my 'right now'. With children, the 'right now' is what they see, not what's ahead. Please consider the CEC for State employees. I am tired and would prefer spending time with my children rather than spending more time apart to afford basic necessities.

[REDACTED]

Coordinator-Alternative Authorizations

Idaho Department of Education

Superintendent Debbie Critchfield

[Redacted]

Good Afternoon,

Regarding change in employee compensation, the pay for state employees cannot keep up with increasing inflation or private sector pay, which directly impacts employee retention. Benefits such as retirement and health insurance are great, but doesn't make up for a lack of pay.

Thank You!

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Bureau of Long Term Care

Division of Medicaid

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Hello, My name is [Redacted]). I am a Maintenance Craftsman Sr. at SHN. I have been employed at the facility for just under 1 year. We have had great employees here that have chose to go elsewhere due to wages! I personally feel that as a Maintenance Craftsman Sr., and the skills needed to even interview, is worth significantly more than the current wage offered for this position. Projects that we do on a daily basis takes a lot of knowledge and several years of experience to do.

With the rising costs of living, and the wage I make, it is a real struggle that I highly recommend this could be resolved easily. By paying us what we're worth (4-5\$/ hr. more), I strongly believe we would have no problems filling positions that have been vacant. Investing in good employees would be very beneficial for the state in several ways. I personally plan on being a career employee as long as the State of Idaho does its part and increases the pay scale significantly! Another option could be free medical and dental coverage for the entire family.

Something needs to happen to reduce turn-over rate so we keep valuable employees!

Thank you for your time,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Good afternoon,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond. Although, I am disappointed with the timeline and process to solicit a response. I apologize, I am only a year in as a state employee and not readily informed on this process to have sound expectations. Hopefully this doesn't come across the wrong way. With that said, I don't feel I was given enough opportunity to effectively communicate a highly developed testimonial response. In fact, I know for a fact that other agencies were in the same belief. This request arrived to me in email yesterday afternoon December 26th the day before it is due. In the short time this has been out, 7 people have already told me they deleted this, mostly because they didn't understand, and "I heard it doesn't really matter anyway." Looking at the chain, IDHR sent out an email soliciting a response and an opportunity to respond to something that is this important and that affects our compensation to agencies after 1600, on a Friday, before Christmas, when a lot of people take time off, with no real explanation or guidance other than "State employees are invited to provide written testimony to the Change in Employee Compensation (CEC) Committee about the state's personnel system and employee compensation," and only giving us till today. I believe this is a huge foul and perpetuates the feeling of our voices don't matter. This really is unfortunate messaging with DHR, but with good leadership, we can overcome. Although late in the game for this year, I would ask that we do better next time. Considering my workload and attempting to provide intelligent testimony/comments to this important subject was difficult. It would also help to provide more detail/guidance for those of us, that are not directly involved in the process, would understand.

If I failed somehow in understanding the intent and significance of this I do apologize, still learning! Just school me up on what I missed.

With the limited information I have, I'm concluding that I am supposed to make comment on the Change in Employee Compensation and Benefits Report 2025 posted on your website. I also believe that my focus area is probably on page 6 which drives the rest of the conversation and analysis to comment on. In the little time I had, looking back at the previous "Change in Employee Compensation and Benefits Report 2024," how that evolved and where we are in the 2025 report, I would argue it's good but arguable still a little disappointing. However very much respect the continued and monumental work that goes into this so that key decision makers can make as informed decision as possible, so thank you for what you do.

- Primary Salary Structure

I believe we should be more aggressive in reaching the 50th percentile goal. The goal itself appears reasonable. Looking at the percentages and the data provided between where we stand and the Public/Private Sector, I believe more groundbreaking aggressive momentum is needed to slow the pace at which our differential gap is progressing by making state employment more competitive and valued through wage increases. I can appreciate the arguments for both the percent increase and "fixed"

increase of last year. Each has their place and role. I wish I had more time to assess the impact of the currently proposed \$78.9 million vs a higher value as it relates to the merit increase. Again, if it's in the document and taken into consideration I apologize, I'm running out of time to provide a response and have work priorities that came up. I would also argue that the State benefits, which make up the total compensation aside from just salary, are good.

In the end and the limited research and comparative analysis provided in the document, I would implore you to fund the minimum 4.5 increase but strongly consider a more groundbreaking initiative designed to aggressively lessen the disparity of pay. I am coming to State work after 27 years Active Duty and in my short tenure I can see how this is not sustainable to recruit and sustain our future work force/generation. We cannot reasonably function or sustain the level of service (workload increases, loss of people to retirement/public/private sector, loss of institutional knowledge, lack of recruitment, etc) to the public at the current structure for long without long last effects.

- Public Safety Salary Structure

I also argue that salary structure midpoints need to move upward, as it will set the stage for the future. The average 5.8% looks reasonable.

- IT/Engineering Salary Structure

I ran out of time to research and provide quality feedback to this topic. However, on the surface this sounds reasonable with some careful application of such (roles, responsibilities, etc).

- Nursing/Healthcare Salary Structure

Again, I ran out of time to research and provide quality feedback to this topic. However, on the surface this sounds reasonable with some careful application of such.

- Benefits/Retirement

Definitely maintain existing benefits and retirement packages. I believe this speaks for itself, but something the state can hang its hat on and say, "we did pretty good there."

- Job Classifications

This is hot and definitely need the respectable attention and focus.

Again, this is the best I can do in the short window provided. Thank you for listening, hopefully I met the intent!

Thank You,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Idaho Public Utilities Commission

[REDACTED]

Hello,

I am writing this testimony in response to the meeting to review the states Change in Employee Compensation. Over the 5 and half years I have been with the Department of Health and Welfare: Family and Children Services, I have witness an overturn of thirty-five (35) workers in the Region 2 area. Of these amount of workers that have left the primary reason has been lack of increase in pay to work related stress. With the rising prices of food and daily supplies increasing over 6% in 2023 and expected to increase for 2024 to be from 2-4% yearly increases are not helping with reasons for retention of skilled employees. I have worked with the Department through my schooling and accepted the IV-E scholarship in return for promise to work for the state. This promise is what helps me stay with the State as being a first responder to a family home with concerns for parents actively using drugs, second hand trauma from horrifying child injuries or in a rural community the backlash from investigations with our current pay rate make many relocate, to slightly lower paying jobs, or same pay with significantly less stressors. I hope that during the meeting this is reviewed that management takes the time to consider more than just wages to retain skills individuals for long time but the need to recruit others to apply using our benefits and the potential competitive pay rates as being below the 50thtile does not encourage our employees.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Children & Family Services

Region II – Lewiston

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear Legislators,

When deciding this year's CEC, I ask that you consider the impact your decision could have on the entire state and urge you to do as much as possible to help state employees navigate Idaho's growth and increasing cost of living.

It is imperative to the success of all Idahoans that the state keep up with the rapidly increasing cost of living. Employees are struggling to buy homes, pay rent, and afford groceries. The stress of financial insecurity can contribute to physical health problems and mental health issues, which also impact employee retention and morale. Employees are leaving to find higher-paying jobs, and positions remain vacant due to lower wages. Prolonged vacancies burn out current employees and cause lower morale and higher turnover. These issues can directly impact the agency's ability to provide services.

State wages were behind the curve before the pandemic, and inflation and increased home prices and rental rates have only exacerbated the issue. Increasing compensation for state employees directly improves their quality of life, creates more opportunities for the little Idahoans they are raising, and increases the quality of service provided to the Idahoans they serve.

Thank you for your time.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Idaho Dept of Health and Welfare

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Hello,

I would like to see the committee adopt the full recommendations for CEC raises for our employees. We continue to struggle to retain and also hire good and qualified staff while we try to compete with private businesses. We do not offer a competitive compensation package for the business we represent. Allowing all state agencies to bring staff in at higher wages and give higher raises during yearly evaluations will help all of us retain qualified staff.

Thank you

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Idaho State Liquor Division



MixBlendEnjoy.com | Liquor.Idaho.gov

1349 E Beechcraft Ct, Boise, ID 83716

[REDACTED]

To whom it may concern,

Thank you for the opportunity to voice current thoughts as it pertains to CEC.

The two things I would like to have considered are the growing Treasure Valley population resulting in longer commute times between home and work as well as our increased cost of living. I am a proud Idahoan and believe there is value in increasing salaries to be more comparable to our neighboring states.

Thank you for all your time and energy you put into serving our treat state!



[REDACTED]

Idaho Department of Education
Superintendent Debbie Critchfield

[REDACTED]
sde.idaho.gov

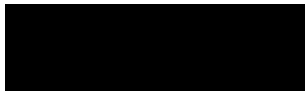


To whom this may concern,

Thank you for your time in allowing us to comment on the CEC review. I did some review on the current information that was provided and with my knowledge of what I have learned on my own basically states that Idaho is the lowest paid state for employment. While our cost of living and essentials to live is on the rise. We currently are blessed to be able to telework from the comfort of our home and that saves us money on Gas and time on the streets to do more at home. But with the news of the policy changes to

telework I don't see that being a blessing much longer. The importance for a significant pay increase is needed. It would release the tension and stress of work, life balance and provide motivation for growth. I am grateful every year that our pay is reviewed for increase, and we are given raises. But I feel this time, it's truly important to provide a voice as to why. I work two jobs currently because the cost to live is expensive. So, to have a raise significant enough to help me through is important to me and my family I raise on my own. With a pay increase it shows me also that I am valued at my job. Makes me proud to be here not only because I enjoy my job but because I am paid well and I feel taken care of and motivated to stay longer. I hope that people who work for the state of Idaho are not just looked at as a number based on pay and type of work but as individuals working hard to stay alive in a State and Country that is divided by many factors. At the end of the day, we all work hard to live. Lets make it make sense.

Thank you for your time.



Department of Health and Welfare

Childsupport@dhw.idaho.gov

Dear CEC Committee,

The employees that work for the state of Idaho represent an important resource, as they carry out work deemed necessary for a functional government in Idaho. Retention of experienced employees and the ability to attract new talent improves the efficiency and productivity of our government programs. According to a recent survey, more than 3 in 4 employees who quit could have been retained by employers. A few important metrics in a company's ability to retain and attract employees are culture, management, and compensation.

Company culture is the shared values, attitudes, behaviors, and standards that make up a work environment. Culture has a direct impact on productivity, employee engagement, employee retention, and helps the program gain a competitive edge in the market. There are numerous approaches a program can take to gauge the health of its culture and improve it. Programs should be encouraged to actively find ways to improve upon and establish a healthy work culture.


Management and leadership might be the most important aspect of a program. More than 3 quarters of Americans say their manager sets the culture, but 36% say their manager doesn't understand how to lead a team. More than half of employees who voluntarily leave their roles say their manager or organization had the power to keep them from leaving. Current managers should be encouraged to improve their management skills by taking courses or workshops, and they should be provided with tools they can use to continually develop as leaders.

While culture and management are important to employee retention, compensation still plays a key role. A survey done in 2021 found that low pay was a leading reason that employees changed jobs, particularly for younger people. Two relevant quotes from the Idaho 2025 CEC Report: *"During Fiscal Year 2024, the State implemented a target for our salary structures midpoints to be at the 25th percentile of the market. The 25th percentile means that 75% of the market pays more than the State and 25% pays less."* *"Looking forward, the State is eager to move our target to the 50th percentile of the overall market."* Implementing a target pay rate that is at the 50th percentile of the overall market

and providing funding to move employees toward that target rate would remove compensation as a factor in employee turnover, in my opinion.

Retaining and attracting quality employees is the best way to ensure that the citizens of Idaho are realizing the greatest benefit from their tax dollars that fund government programs. The cost of replacing an individual employee can range from one-half to two times the employee's annual salary. It may take new employees two years or more to achieve the productivity of existing employees. As an Idaho taxpayer, I'm encouraged to see our legislation taking an active role in looking for ways to improve employee retention.

Sincerely,



Idaho Falls
Department Water Resources

Hello,

I would like to request a raise; my job is really demanding and can lead to many difficult calls/cases but the reward is to continue to help Idaho families.

I would agree it is beneficial to approve the raise as well as necessary; my wages cannot keep up with the grocery price increases, rent increase, etc..

Thank you.


Self-Reliance Specialist
ID Child Support



Hello Christine and legislators,

I have done a quick review of the Change in Employee Compensation and Benefits Report. I am pleased to see the progress we have made and the trajectory in which we are headed. I work in Region 7 as the Human Services Supervisor and as a PSR Case Aid (we have not yet gotten approval to replace the position I was in prior to becoming supervisor). It is difficult to cover both positions and we should discuss the improvement of the hiring system for the state next.

My current compensation concern is that we have been short a person on the admin team at the front desk now for more than three months. They have had the job posted for those three months and once even offered the position to two different people who turned¹⁶ down the offer even though they chose to

interview for it. We should focus on our compensation packages reflecting the fact that a good secretary is worth the same as any other career option in our economy.

Thank you for hearing us,

[REDACTED]

Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

Children and Family Services

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

We as state employees and public servants work hard serving our public, and with inflation deserve a raise to keep up with the economy.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Department of Health and Welfare

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Mychildsupport.idaho.gov

As an employee of the state it would be a welcome change to receive a pay increase worthy of the work we do for fellow Idahoans. We have been overwhelmed by the amount of calls and work this past year as covid protections have ended. It would be amazing to receive something other than a heartfelt thank you to acknowledge the amazing work we do selflessly on behalf of others.

Our pay is significantly lower than the private sector. The benefits are great but with the tremendous increase in inflation and housing most of us are just barely scaping by.

I worked for the benefits side and now work for Child support. I don't believe you can comprehend the dedication and sacrafice that is made daily for the call center employees.

Please consider this as we move into the new year. We all worked together to make Idaho a great place to live in and belong to.

[REDACTED]

Child Support Self Reliance Specialist

Department of Health and Welfare

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Mychildsupport.idaho.gov

Good afternoon,

My name is [REDACTED] & I live and work up in North Idaho. I worked for the health district a number of years ago (Panhandle Health District 1) mainly up in Sandpoint, but also @ our district office in Hayden from time to time and am now "back in the fold" with the local PERSI office in Coeur d'Alene as a Front Desk Member Services Representative. It has always seemed to be true for me and a number of my friends/ co-workers & colleagues that if one chose to live in Idaho, one had to hustle another 2nd job or side job so-to-speak to truly make \$\$ ends meet. The position I am in now is a 6 month probationary situation and the pay (hourly compensation) is certainly not huge, I think some of the teenagers out in the marketplace right now might be making more than I am at fast food establishments flipping burgers or slinging tacos @ Taco Bell. I accepted this job with "eyes wide open" knowing that if I do my very best and hang in there, my persistence will hopefully pay off in the long-run and I shall be rewarded for my ongoing loyalty, my can-do attitude and great work ethic. I am 61 years young, I am not ready to retire yet but certainly ready to help those that ARE! Truly I say to all of you: this is one of the lowest wage amounts that I have accepted in many years & I just gotta tell you folks: I struggle with the \$ numbers every month, I drive an older 1997 Oldsmobile Achieva and she's hangin on by a thread as I can't afford a new or even used car at this point because it just isn't in the budget. My monthly rent is \$1395.00 and with my current hourly wage being only \$16.25, plus other monthly bills to factor in, I am literally taking it day by day. Thanks for listening to these comments from me, & by-the-way: I did take the opportunity to actually read thru some of your "Fiscal Year 2025 CEC

report” and found it to be very interesting reading. I surely hope that in the very near and not too distant future I too can honestly say that I work for the State of Idaho, as a permanent classified employee, and that I make a truly decent living wage.

Thanks Again for your valuable time, attention and diligence & Happy New Year!

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] **Member Services Representative | PERSI**
607 N 8th | Boise ID 83702 | [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear Christine Otto,

I hope that any opportunity for being anonymous can be provided to me. I sincerely hope that expressing my concerns and accepting the invitation to provide testimony to the CEC committee will not impact my position at the Department or relationship with management. I am being very brave to send this from my email address as I know many employees that would not dare to send testimony with their name and/or could not make the time (given 24-hour notice). Thank You.

To whom it may concern in the Idaho State Legislature:

Few people with an advanced degree in a technical field with years of experience would consider working for the State of Idaho a top job in terms of wages and other compensation. Yet, that is exactly the education and experience it takes to meet the needs of the technical, regulatory, and administrative positions in this State. This level of expertise is not reflected in the pay and benefits. For example, the administrative position at the front desk who I would argue is one of the most important positions in the Department, makes the least in wages. When that position is open or improperly staffed it affects every single person.

The hiring managers do not have the time and resources to recruit new employees, manage the current employees, and do other parts of the job. It takes so much time to recruit, find a decent candidate, and have the candidate accept before a better job has been offered to them. This leaves the Department in a constant state of being understaffed. Every day the population increases, creating greater demand and workload for the state employees – especially those in water resources..

Compared to other government agencies, the State falls behind in both benefits and wages. My equitable counterparts at the USGS, BOR, and the city of Boise make almost 5\$/hr more and have more leave (annual/sic/family) allotted to them. Private companies are happy to recruit from the State pool of employees to get the experience the State has provided but pay twice the wage with comparable benefits and options to telecommute.

There are other benefits that the State could offer that would put it in a competitive realm for attracting and retaining employees. Wage increase is one way, but a dramatic increase in leave earned per pay period, combined with a positive and current outlook on telecommuting (at least some portion) would appeal to the younger generation. Health care is a plus for the State, but many other government and private companies can boast of the same.

I stay for now because I choose to be of service to the water users of the state of Idaho. I stay for now because I want to make change from within and I see possibilities for improvement. I stay out of a possibly misguided sense of loyalty to the next generation of young women in STEM. My family cannot live on my salary – period. Between mortgage/rent, car, food, childcare, etc. - there are no extras. We rely on smart choices in the stock exchange, and my husband's family. Private companies reach out weekly to inquire about my availability to discuss opportunities, but I want to keep my PSLF option. I am waiting for a rare opening at the BOR, or the City of Boise.

Bottom line, you get what you pay for. The top-down approach is not the approach of the people. State employees should be strong, well provided for, and resilient from the bottom up. Idaho is behind in technology and understanding the mindset of the modern worker. The morale of the State employee is low, very low, and I believe it is a direct reflection of the economy and not being able to keep up with the cost of living. It is demoralizing to put on a happy face and help people with their challenging issues when your bank account is empty, every day is a 40-mile commute, you cannot afford groceries, and your student loan payment is due. I know fellow employees who ration meat and can't afford apples.

Something needs to change for Idaho to compete with companies in our own state and others in the United States of America, I hope that you can help us. Thank you for your time and consideration.



Technical Hydrologist

Water Distribution

Idaho Department of Water Resources

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

To Whom This May Concern,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am currently a part of the Financial Integrity Team within the Child Support Department. I appreciate your time and willingness to hear out each state employee that submits one of these letters. I want to point out that while the data that was gathered and put together is well thought out; the 100+ pages of research that was gathered does seem extensive for those that do not specialize in the field. I understand trying to be open with your employees but where an individual whose main job is to gather this information but for another as myself who spends at least 40 hours a week with my job with the state, I do not have time to go through all this data collection and try to ensure that I am also informed. If a suggestion may be made that there is a shortened version of this provided in the future, it would be much appreciated; as for the timing of this since the data was released during Holiday times there are many employees who are taking time off to spend with their loved ones who will not have a chance to write a letter to the CEC or get time to read through the reports. If this information could be provided earlier in December to allow adequate time for employees to respond; it may allow for more state employee voices to be heard.

A couple of things as to why I believe why a pay increase should continue to grow past just a 3% increase and the growing merit-based increase is the growing economy especially here in Idaho, turnover rate, and the potential of telework coming to an end. Based off the most recent pay raise I was roughly receiving only an extra \$105 per check. This amount will be enough to purchase a tank of gas for my vehicle and some groceries. My mortgage payment already takes up nearly half of my monthly pay. While a raise is always appreciated, the raise received this past year does make individual employees feel the need to search out an additional job to keep their own family clothed and fed. There are multiple

employees I know within the department that are having to do side jobs to make ends meet. With a proper raise the state could hope to see an increase in morale and retentiveness if workers were not having to worry if their main job would be covering all the bills.

On 1/20/2023 Dave Jeppesen had announced that the Health and Welfare turnover rate slightly improved in the state Fiscal Year 2021-2022 from 21.7% to 18.7%. I was reading over Appendix F: Turnover Data that the state experienced a slight decrease from Fiscal year 2022-2023 from 21.8% to 18.9%. If the goal is to still get this number down to 14% as previously mentioned by Jeppesen then it appears we went up 0.2% in turnover rate. In the FY23 Exit Interview Data that was gathered 24.86% rated pay as the most important factor. As state employees we are consistently working for every family and individual that resides within our state; but when all the hard work is not reciprocated with recognition that the employees deserve better pay could be why they are seeking new jobs with that better pay.

Recently a notification was sent out from Monica Young that an update to Telework is coming; they did not provide many details and advised that we should not worry or “borrow trouble.” However, sending out these update does cause worry and one of the main concerns is now that the money that was no longer being spent on travel costs will be put back into place if we are to return to the office. Referencing back to that rough difference of \$105 a check means my most recent “raise” would be applied towards filling up my tank just to make it to my job with the state. Telework has been a blessing to finding that work/life balance and the elimination of that could lead to burnt out employees who are not seeing their “raise” as acceptable and turnover rate increasing. If state employees are to return to the office, then there is even more reason to ensure that our upcoming raise is worth the time of the employees that are there helping the departments within Idaho run efficiently for the families and individuals of this state.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Self-Reliance Specialist, Idaho Child Support Services

Financial Integrity Team

Department of Health and Welfare, Division of Welfare

Toll Free: (800) 356-9868

Fax: (855) 349-2408

According to ZipRecruiter “As of Dec 20, 2023, the average hourly pay for the Fast Food jobs category in Idaho is \$22.23 an hour.” This is luckily above a living wage for 1 adult in Idaho. At my State of Idaho job I make below a livable wage. At 15.96 an hour I essentially make \$6.27 less than a Panda Express employee.. I started working for the state of Idaho at 18; I got told that it was a wonderful job that would pay great and be a great choice for a career. I work for children and family services with a great deal of mental stress that this part of the department includes. There are people I work alongside with that have to work extra hours in our Short Term Rentals to make their mortgage. With the pay I get, I cant afford to go to community college, I cant afford to buy fruits and vegetables, or a car payment, I can't afford to rent a home, or think about buying one, with this salary I cant dream of affording to have a family, or even a pet. I can afford to live with my parents, help with the cost of some groceries and laundry detergent. I just want a livable wage

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

Technical Records Specialist I

The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

Family and Community Services

3402 Franklin Rd., Caldwell, ID 83605

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Greetings!

This won't be nearly as thought out and organized as I'd like, as I'd completely forgotten about the opportunity amongst all the holiday hubbub. Thankfully, a friend reminded me, and I do believe it is quite important that we advocate for ourselves. It is well known within my department, Child Support, that similar positions in other states pay far more. We have been striving over the last 5-6 years to become the best child support agency in the US and we are making great strides toward hitting that goal. I believe this feat should be recognized and honored in the form of a monetary increase in salary. The rising economy is making it difficult for most Idahoans to get by. I listen to calls day in and day out about how people are becoming homeless or suffering from food insecurities. Goodness, even my family is struggling with food insecurity. It would be nice to be appropriately recognized for the difficult and dedicated work we provide to the State for our citizens. And it would be such a relief to know that I can continue to feed my family after I get home from serving my community every day.

Again, had I had more time to work on this it would have been more in depth and thought out. I truly hope you consider the points I've made and find the importance in providing CEC.

Best wishes,

[REDACTED]

Self-Reliance Specialist

Idaho Child Support Services

Toll Free: (800) 356-9868

Fax: (855) 349-2408

Christine Otto and fellow committee members,

I have a few comments regarding the state's employee compensation.

First, out teachers deserve more in their compensation and in their health benefits. I know that compared to what other employees of the state have received in the past, the health insurance for

teachers is more expensive for them. Considering the COVID-19 pandemic, we should not forget that our teachers are some of our front-line workers. If I must miss a day or two of work, a few people will notice. When teachers miss work, 25 or more children will notice as well as their parents and fellow teachers. Please help ensure that the teachers have additional assistance with respect to their health care. Increases in their pay is well deserved too.

Secondly, please be mindful of the benefits and costs to the individuals when addressing changes to insurance plans. Individual employees can do little to have a seat at the table for health insurance concerns. The health insurance benefits are a big portion of employee compensation, and increasing individual costs would be a big step down.

In 2020, I believe that state employees were asked to hold off on changes in employment compensation and departments were asked to hold back on purchases to help buffer against the pandemic. The state employees missed out on those economic advancements and assistance at work, and when Idaho ended up with a surplus money in 2022, the state chose to distribute state funds to businesses and some of the general population despite the holds taken by state employees. If health benefits are more expensive for the state employee, we're taking a loss on the remaining stable element of our employee compensation.

Thank you for your consideration,

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I believe that the position I hold with the State is vastly underrated and underpaid. I have always been told that having a job with the State is the best way to go because of the Retirement package. However at this point I will probably starve to death and be homeless before retirement. I would like to break down what exactly I do on a daily basis and then break down my compensation compared to my bills.

I am a Client Service Technician with Family and Children Services. My main job is to facilitate and supervise visitation between children in foster care and their biological parents. What that specifically entails is so much more. First I have to coordinate with anywhere between 2-5 different people involved to get a visit set up. I have to coordinate with schools and daycare to get the children out of class. I have to make sure there is space at the department to do the visit which isn't always easy. Once a visit is set up I have to update my calendar with all the information on the visit, everyone involved, all phone numbers, locations of all participants and transport times. On the day of the visit I drive a State vehicle to pick the children involved up and bring them to the visit. Transports can be anywhere from 5 minutes long to over an hour each way. Once we arrive at the visit the children then get to see their biological parents, sometimes this is a good thing and sometimes it is quite scary for the children. My part is to help the children get comfortable and not leave them in the room till they are. This sometimes agitates the parents and they can be quite aggressive and unkind. While the visit is going it is my job to make sure that the children are safe at all times. I have had to physically take children out of the arms of screaming parents, stop inappropriate touching, inappropriate conversation and end visits because the parent was so high/intoxicated that it had become unsafe. It is my responsibility to go in and end this visit alone. I have had no training or anything on how to appropriately handle people who are agitated. If this was only happening for one family that would be doable. However I currently serve 13 families every single week. I have more face to face interaction with everyone involved then the Case Worker does, I

understand that their job is also difficult and they have earned a degree to do their job but that does not mean that I do not deserve to get compensated for the work that I do. After the visit is over I transport the children back to where they go, sometimes this means 5 different stops where I have to unload every single child just to drop off one. Sometimes children do not want to leave and refuse. I had a situation where a child screamed for 2 hours because they did not want to leave and there was nothing anyone could do. We had to just sit and wait and let her scream. This caused my next visit to have to get cancelled because there is very rarely anyone to help pick up a visit. I had to find time in my already overfull schedule to make the cancelled visit up. When the visit was cancelled I had to hear all about the frustration from every single person involved including the case worker. If the office is closed for a Holiday I have to find time to do a makeup visit, but I do not get overtime pay for this as the Holiday doesn't count toward hours, so often on Holiday weeks I am working 3-7 extra hours but getting no extra money even though this is a required of me and I have to stay late.

Another huge aspect of my job is going to Court for the visits I do. When I got the job I was told that my position gets called maybe once a year for court. I have been here for 2 years and have already gone around 12 times. Court is scary, I am expected to talk about all the good and bad things that have happened. I have to do this right in front of the biological parents. I have to tell all the nitty gritty dirty details. That would not be so bad, however the judge then has 30-90 days to make a decision. In that time I still have to do the visits every single week. So I have to say out loud in front of them all these horrible things and then I have to interact 4-12 more times till it is over. I have been yelled at, pushed, spit on, my name and phone number leaked and children ripped out of my arms. But I still have to provide these visits all alone. The amount of stress and fear involved with what I do it quite high.

On 3 separate occasion I have said a final goodbye to my family because I did not know if I would be walking out of a visit in one piece or even alive. I am not allowed to pull a visit from the community or in home back to the office. I had a dad that I would have to go in to the home before the visit to make sure nobody was wearing a gun. I talked to everyone I could to get this visit moved and everyone said to basically suck it up. We had court the morning of his visit and he was told his rights were being terminated. I asked to not go into a home full of guns with a man who had nothing left to lose and was told that was my job and it had to get done. The wage for my position is \$16.35 so my life is worth \$16.35 to the State of Idaho and that is a hard pill to swallow.

Here is a breakdown of my wage vs my bills

BI-weekly paycheck \$970 after deductions = \$1940 monthly

Expenses

Rent-\$950

Car insurance/gas/maintenance - \$ 150

Phone/Internet- \$110

Power/Gas/WST- \$250

Random bills- \$75

Groceries monthly=\$200-\$250

Total=\$1785

That means after I pay everything necessary for survival I have approximately \$75 each paycheck for emergencies. That is one doctor visit. God forbid I get a flat tire or my check engine light comes on. A %3.9-4.5 raise at my rate would be a \$.68-0.78 raise. That would make my check only \$58-62 more before taxes. The people who make more money get a bigger raise, the people who aren't living in poverty get a bigger raise then the people who actually need it and it is just an awful feeling.

I live in poverty. I have not gotten a single new item of clothing in the 2 years I have worked here because my budget leaves nothing. Currently my account is overdrawn because I traveled for Christmas and the gas I needed to get to my family was more than I had. I couldn't even get a gift for anyone. This is not life or fair. The McDonalds beside my house hires at \$15.50 an hour. I could make the same money because I would not have %7 automatically taken and get paid daily and have none of this stress. I found out this year that I was pregnant, sadly it ended with a miscarriage. The father wanted nothing to do with the baby so I was doing the research to see if I could do it on my own. I make "too much" money to qualify for any assistance at all. NO food stamps and no ICCP. I would have had to quit my job and live off of state benefits in order to have that baby. How is that fair? The state would rather pay a person not to work as opposed to paying people a fair living wage. I get that minimum wage is only \$7 and hour and I make way more then that. But we are in an economic crisis and the State is working me to the bone.

[REDACTED]

Client Service Tech - Reg 4
Department of Health & Welfare
Family and Children Services
1720 Westgate Dr., STE D
Boise, ID 83704

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Thank you for taking letters from those of us who will be most affected by your decision to raise the wages or not.

There are many reasons why I feel the work we do is vital for our state and communities and we need to keep doing it. There are many factors that assist state workers to do their best work. One is our compensation.

The economy has changed, minimum wage has increased and the cost of living has increased. This can interfere with our ability to do our best work.

Grocery stores and lawn workers are making the same thing I am as a trained State Employee and it can be a struggle to not look for other work when other companies are paying better. To ensure the State of Idaho keeps the best workers we need to be more competitive in the pay.

The State offers some of the best retirement but we need to offer some of the better pay rates also to maintain and attract the best employees.

Please keep this in mind when making your decision.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

Self Reliance Specialist

Child Support Enforcement

Good afternoon,

Based on the rise in inflation alone since 11/2022, state employees deserve a minimum of 4% raise.

<https://www.bls.gov/cpi/latest-numbers.htm>

[REDACTED]

Self Reliance Specialist

[REDACTED]

Hello,

Last year we received a letter stating that we were eligible for \$1.20 based on cost-of-living increase. In addition to that, based on our performance, should receive a percentage increase. I actually thought I would receive a \$1.20 plus some! After all the hype of that letter and how excited the office was in anticipation, I personally only received .65 raise last year! I received an exemplary rating 2 years in a row based on all the extra tasks and initiative that I take on in my AA1 position. The extra tasks that I have performed was liaison to Governor Little's Proclamation for the Coeur d'Alene Advisory Committee, team-building exercises for the entire office, and my time spent at the County Fair educating the public about Surface Water, harmful algal blooms and the health of our lakes, streams, and tributaries. I am also the Public Records Custodian for the Coeur d'Alene region; other PRR custodians are AA2s. I have been with the state almost 5 years now and still haven't caught up to the wages I received at previous employment in this area; I don't even make \$20 an hour yet. Target is advertising it starts folks at \$26 an hour in our region. I consider my administrative skills more valuable than my previous experience in the retail field. The expensive region in which I live should reflect the wages needed to survive. The level of performance and service that I have delivered to my Surface Water/DEQ team, the public, and my dedication to DEQ's mission merits an exemplary rating, but what good is that rating and level of care if we aren't compensated appropriately for the region we live in...

Best Regards,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
2110 Ironwood Parkway, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho 83814

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

<http://www.deq.idaho.gov/>

To the CEC Committee: Senator Kevin Cook, Co-Chair, Representative Matthew Bundy, Co-Chair, Senator Jim Guthrie, Senator Van T. Burtenshaw, Senator Cindy J. Carlson, Senator Janie Ward-Engelking, Representative James Holtzclaw, Representative Mike Kingsley, Representative Josh Wheeler, and Representative John Gannon,

First, I would like to say that I notice State of Idaho employees were not notified until 5:05 PM, a time after normal working hours, on the Friday before the Christmas holiday, that you would like our input. Further, the deadline for submissions, today at 5:00 PM, and now changed to Friday, December 29 at 5:00 PM, falls on a date within a week where many Idaho State Employees are taking some much needed time off with their families. They won't even see the notification until January 2, 2024 when they return from leave, so they will not have a chance to send a response. This makes it appear as though you are not interested in our input.

Attached are scans of pages 3 through 6 from the CEC Change in Employee Compensation and Benefits Report FY 2025 Executive Summary and from the Transparent Idaho website on which I will base my comments.

1. On page 3 of the Executive Summary, it is noted that the State of Idaho employs more Idahoans in the public and private sector than any other employer in the State. This tends to skew any survey information obtained regarding pay unless all Idaho State Employees are specifically excluded from any pay discussion. I don't see that noted anywhere in the documentation.
2. Further, on page 3, it is stated that the legislature has invested significantly in the workforce to hire and retain talented employees. I say that is flummery. I have worked for the State for more than 12 years and I have seen countless many talented employees hired only to watch them walk away as they are lured back into the private sector by wages that take care of their basic needs *and* allow them some room to have discretionary income beyond the bare minimum of existing paycheck to paycheck.
3. On page 4, where the 25th percentile of the market is discussed, the graph line shows current wages, *after last year's increase*, barely reaching the beginning of the market line. It shows the target for the State for FY2025, at 75% of Policy, still significantly less than the 25th percentile of the market. The table on the same page shows that the Idaho Current Average Pay doesn't even reach policy once you hit pay range "I" and higher. The only reason the State raised the wages in the D to H sections is to compete with companies like Subway where a person can make sandwiches all day and earn \$19.00 per hour. Yes, \$19.00 per hour to make sandwiches at a fast-food shop. The State was unable to hire in the lesser wage ranges and was forced to raise these wages to draw in new employees. The State has not recognized that the same thing must be done for *skilled* workers in the other wage ranges.
4. On page 5, it says that the State will focus on the 50th percentile of the markets. How are we to believe that a change in your "focus" to the 50th percentile of the market will benefit us when a focus on the 25th percentile has not resulted in us being brought up to even that level? The chart showing the market increase projection when looking at the 50th percentile is abysmal. We are always told to "look at the benefits package" the State offers. Well, and I know you have heard this before, the benefits package does not put food on the

table, pay the rent, and pay other basic living expenses *today*. How can a person look to benefits providing for the future when they are so depressed that they can barely exist today? Where is there hope to be found when you can't see out of the financial darkness around you?

5. Last year, we needed a minimum of an 8% wage increase across the board just to keep up with inflation for that year. That doesn't even address the number of years we have been behind inflation and the increasing cost of living in Idaho and especially in Boise. Of course, we did not get that 8%. But that same year, last year, my property taxes went up by 39% in Boise, after the previous year where they had already gone up 54%. That and no one cares that my husband is a native Idahoan who has been living on the same family ground for four generations. The increasing tax rates combined with the lack of compensating spendable wages will put us off that ground in a very short time if something is not done to bring pay into line with the increased cost of living here.
6. Page 6 shows the 4.5% cap on merit increases you are asking for in FY2025. These caps discourage excellence in work. My husband worked for HP for 27.5 years and then another 5 years at Micron. When he received excellent reviews and worked at levels above and beyond his fellows, he received merit raises of 10-12% in a year, plus bonuses and stock options. The ability to receive such increases fostered an environment of competition and ingenuity that I do not see here at the State offices. Without incentive, why put yourself out for others or for the "State"?
7. Increasing the Primary Salary Structure midpoints upward 3.7% helps new employees coming in under the new pay ranges, but does nothing for those of us who are already working here. It only moves us lower in our pay ranges and helps us to become more discouraged that those of us who come to work everyday, and some have been working here for years, to care for the health and safety of our fellow Idahoans, are not even cared about by our employer, the State. This feeling is furthered when we hear about the huge dollar amount of surplus run by the State. Why is it that the money can be thrown into the schools, but the employees of the State, some providing homes where those students live, are not worth funding?
8. The attachment from Transparent Idaho showing the pay range trends says it all. Wages within the State employee system were held down from 2009 through 2021 until inflation and a dwindling workforce created an environment where the State had no choice but to increase pay for its employees. That increase was aimed mostly at the lower wage range employees and those a little further up in the system were largely ignored.
9. The Workforce Tenure graph is also very telling. Very few employees can make it to their fifth year of employment to become vested in PERSI and to take advantage of other "offered" benefits because they can't make ends meet at home and are forced to seek other employment where they can take care of the basic needs of their families. Maybe that is by design. Maybe that is the way you keep the State of Idaho going. You do not fund the employees, causing constant employee turnover prior to vesting in PERSI, so you don't have to pay on those promised benefits. The way the world is going, that would not surprise me.

I am asking that you would re-think your methods of determining State employee "compensation". Rather than comparing our *compensation packages* with those offered by other employers, a method which is not working; I ask that you would look at the increasing costs of rents and mortgages, driven mostly by *non-Idahoans*. I ask that you would look at the increasing costs of food, medical care, utilities, clothing, vehicles, fuel,

auto registrations, property taxes, and repairs and maintenance. Please ask yourselves, what does the pay we are providing to the employees, who are tasked with taking care of other Idahoans, buy for them? Why are so many merely existing in the drudgery of a paycheck to paycheck existence where an unexpected expense, like a car repair, forces them to choose between putting food on the table or getting the car repaired so they can continue to get to work?

I once had a State employee who earned a substantial amount more than \$100,000 per year tell me, "You don't need any more money!" Well, I challenge all of you to come to my home, my mobile home, to come to live at my level, under the wages I earn, to see if you still think that State employee wages are sufficient because the benefits amount is added into the compensation mix. I dare say, you would not be able to continue at your current standard of living, including providing help for your children to provide for your grandchildren, under the wages I receive.

Thank you for taking the time to read through the submissions you receive from the Idaho State employees, who on such short notice, send them to the committee, if you really even read them. Every year, I wonder. Oh, I get the e-mail saying my submission has been received, but I wonder if it is read and considered. I thank you if it is.


Technical Records Specialist 3

Bureau of Facilities Standards

P.O. Box 83720

Boise, ID 83720-0009


Good afternoon,

I am writing in the hopes of improving the dire income situation for state workers and their income. As a current employee who works hard to ensure Idahoans have the help they need I am saddened to know that my income as a full time employee of the state make just above the Federal Poverty level for Idaho. I understand that is a choice to work for the state instead of the private sector and I see many of my co-workers leave us to go do just that. Idaho needs good employees and would have a much better retention of those good employees if it paid enough to allow us to not only pay rent but buy groceries in the same month without having to put those groceries on a credit card.

It is a shame that even though the government is well aware the cost of living in Idaho has increased and the economy is failing it refuses to make the leap that is needed to keep our income competitive and worth the hard work and dedication we continue give.

I would argue the turn-over of employees would be much less with greater compensation wasting less resource on training and giving it back to Idahoans.

[REDACTED]
Self-Reliance Specialist
Division of Self-Reliance
[REDACTED]

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration regarding employee compensation. I greatly appreciate what was approved last year. However, as you may also be experiencing, the cost of everything has greatly exceeded wages in public sector employment.

I have read the proposal from human resources and am hopeful that you will approve it. What we do is important for the health and safety of all Idahoans and we should be compensated sufficiently to be able to provide for the health and safety of our own families.

Thank you.

[REDACTED]
Medical Program Specialist
Licensing and Certification
Health and Welfare.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the state's personnel system and employee compensation. When the state allowed teleworking there was no plan in place to compensate or attract those that cannot telework. There are so many efforts to attract teleworkers and none for those that cannot telework. The cost savings to teleworkers is obvious; gas savings, commute time saved, daycare savings, etc etc. Staff that cannot work remotely should receive an additional % CEC.

After three years of allowing telework I would hope that the state has identified cost savings, those savings could be passed onto employees that cannot telework.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

State Communications

Division of Public Health

Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Greetings,

I hope this email finds you well. Though I know the purpose of this is to address the CEC and employee compensation, I feel it is also appropriate to address the telecommuting issue as well, as I feel they go hand in hand.

I feel as though the decision as to whether we will continue to telecommute full time should be seriously considered when making decisions regarding our compensation. If we are made to return to working in an office, there will be an increase in gas prices, wear and tear on our vehicles, food costs (if someone forgets to bring a lunch, they will have to buy something as opposed to just making something at home), child care costs, and clothing and personal care items will increase greatly if we are made to return to work in an office. I am also very concerned about CO2 emission rising if all employees are made to return to working in an office, this will affect employees financially long term as it effects the overall health and well being of all Idahoans, not just state employees.

The cost of living in Idaho has increased substantially over the last several years, and subsequently this has also resulted in higher gas prices, utility prices, and vehicle prices. I hope, and am confident, all of these increases will be considered when evaluating employee compensation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Thank you and have a great day!

[REDACTED]

EBT Specialist

Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Writing a written testimony.

Employee compensation definitely needs to be re looked at.

The compensation is not even close to comparable with the amount of work that is expected in all positions, but specifically speaking about my own as an SRS.

The cost of living is outrageous all over the United States, but especially in our area now with the major growth in population. With everything that is taken out of our checks and this compensation, It makes it so we can barely get by.

The turnover rate is not good at all for this position because people start and then realize that they are not getting paid enough for the amount of work that is required. People start thinking this is a general data entry job, but then realize it is so much more than that and leave to find other more fitting positions with a better compensation vs work ratio.

[REDACTED]

Self-Reliance Specialist

Division of Welfare

To whom it may concern,

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to address a matter of significant concern that has been affecting the morale and well-being of our dedicated staff here at State Hospital North. It has come to my attention that our current employee compensation is not in line with the national average for wages, and the disparity is particularly pronounced when compared to the national standard.

To maintain a high standard of care and to attract and retain qualified professionals, it is imperative that we address this issue promptly. As you may be aware, Idaho's current wage rates lag behind the national average, putting us at a disadvantage when it comes to recruiting and retaining top-

tier talent. This not only impacts the quality of services we provide but also the overall atmosphere and effectiveness of our facility.

I propose that we work towards bringing all employee wages up to the national average without considering individual merit as the primary factor. While recognizing the importance of rewarding exceptional performance, I believe that a uniform increase will not only boost employee morale but also foster a sense of equity and unity among the staff. However, if merit-based adjustments are deemed necessary, I recommend limiting them to a small percentage of the overall increase.

Investing in our workforce is an investment in the success and reputation of State Hospital North. By aligning our compensation with the national average, we not only demonstrate our commitment to our employees but also position ourselves as a competitive and attractive employer in the healthcare sector.

I appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your response in this matter.

Thank you,

████████████████████

Emergency Management Specialist

State Hospital North

Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

████████████████████

████████████████████

To whom it may concern:

I have been a licensed Master Social Worker for the State of Idaho at Family and Children Services since June 2015. In that capacity I have been a case manager, then moved into the role as a permanency worker, wherein I work co-assigned with cases as a consultant moving towards adoption with children who are in a permanent placement home. Over the past year, I have taken on a dual role of Permanency and licensing worker. In that role, I was fortunate enough to receive the 7% raise as a case carrying worker. I do not feel my fellow licensing professionals have been treated or been seen as important in any aspect over the years, the same workers who work diligently to ensure we even HAVE appropriate

homes for children in foster care to go to. These are the essential workers who are the go-to team when any and all staff, have questions about placement. Licensing are the ones who build those working relationships with the foster homes that can make or break a possible placement needed on a random Friday at 4:45pm when a child(ren) come into care, so the office staff do not have to stay overnight at the department. Licensing team are the ones who hear about a possible removal and know exactly what name to provide the safety worker and RPT team because they know the family has no water hazards, loves sports just like the child, has a dog, much like the child misses, and will support differing cultures, religious, and supports LGBTQ+! When it is so hard to keep foster homes due to, whatever the department is lacking at this moment, licensing workers are the ones who have met with these families, have heard their trauma, talked through rough patches from their upbringing, and heard their heartbreaking stories of their 'why' when it comes to wanting to become a foster home. Licensing have been on the receiving end of the frustrations from foster homes due to lack of communication on the Departments end but have the ability to talk through many concerns in order to keep these homes. You take licensing team away, where do the foster homes come from? Who will license families who are looking at becoming a foster home? We may be background workers in the eyes of the Department, but when you break it down, licensing is essential from the very beginning workings of foster care. I hope to see my fellow workers get the compensation they deserve. Burn out is very much real and feeling our job position is 'not as important as others' will only add to the frustration and lack of connection licensing already feels within the Department walls.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Worker

Dept of Health and Welfare, TF

601 Pole line rd suite 6

[REDACTED]

To whom it may concern,

I [REDACTED] have worked for the state of Idaho since April 2021. I live in Caldwell, where the average rent is around \$1200 for a 1-bedroom apartment. I only make \$21/hr., as a single parent of two, I am living paycheck to paycheck trying to cover bills, even though I work full time. \$1200 is about what I make from one check, so if you can imagine what it is like two live off that it is very difficult. At times, this job is very physical and can be dangerous. I have been physically assaulted on the job myself. I believe psych techs that work for the state deserve to make more. Everyone knows the cost of living in Idaho has gone up drastically in the last few years and it doesn't seem to be slowing down, as is we don't make enough for the cost of living here. We deserve to live without struggling please pay us more. 21\$/hr is not enough to survive here, especially considering the physical aspect of our job and the risk we take every day I believe this is what we deserve. Please take the time and careful consideration to this email.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

[REDACTED]

I want to first thank you for inviting written testimony from employees in regards to the change in employee compensation for FY 2025. As an employee for the state for over 11 years, I have never participated in response to these proposals. However, as a supervisor I feel the obligation to speak on behalf of the individuals I supervise as well as myself. For the past 11 years, the state has never given raises that keep up with inflations and rising expenses in healthcare policy increasements. The current proposal recommending a 4.5% meri-based increase once again fails to keep up with inflation – and by a wide margin. The state experiences more and more turnover as well has difficulties in recruiting new employees. Both of these are additional expenses to the state that could be avoided if the state would actually pay closer to market value for their employees. The FY 2025 Change in Employee Compensation Report is a disappointing read as it clearly shows the state continues to underpay employees and has a really low threshold for their goal of paying in the 25th percentile of the private sector market. This issue is further compounded when the state decides to adjust the Primary Salary Structure midpoints because this only rewards newer employees/new hires. To put my point into perspective, the U.S. inflation rate for 2021 was 4.70% and 8% for 2022. The recommendation of only 4.5% doesn't even come close to the inflation this last year and the raise given last fiscal year came really short also. If the state paid closer to market value, we would be able to retain and recruit strong employees which in turn would save the state money in the long run in reduction of turnover expenses and employee commitment to the state's desired outcomes. I sincerely hope there is some additional consideration given to the suggestions.

[REDACTED]

Program Supervisor

Medicaid Program Integrity Unit

Idaho Department of Health & Welfare

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a state employee, as is my husband. We both love the work we do and making a difference for Idahoans and for the state itself.

Unfortunately with our current pay rates, we are falling further and further behind. Even with increases in the past, after taxes we are worse off than before. The increases are not even keeping up with cost of living changes. Add on top of that escalating healthcare costs and the possibility of telework being taken away, my husband has had to get a second job and I am being forced to look for a new job.

Over the past few years I have put in a lot of overtime hours (working early in the morning, late in the evening and on weekends) for urgent COVID contracts, Luma prep/correcting Luma issues, and now Transparent Idaho. I am not paid for my overtime. I get 1:1 comp time.

My pay is below the “policy” level. It is disheartening that I, and so many others, have given and given to make sure the needed work is done by the deadlines, yet our pay is so far behind what the private and public entities provide. This is the reason so many state employees are leaving and recruiting new, qualified employees is so difficult. The state’s benefits are very nice but they don’t put food on the table or pay the medical bills. It is a sad situation where people who love working for the state can no longer afford to do so.

Please consider funding the CEC to a level where we can afford to continue working for the state. I understand this would be a very large amount of money but what is the cost of losing the qualified people who help to keep everything running? Thank you for your consideration.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

Contracting and Procurements Services

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

To whom it may concern,

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to address a matter of significant concern that has been affecting the morale and well-being of our dedicated staff here at State Hospital North. It has come to my attention that our current employee compensation is not in line with the national average for wages, and the difference is particularly pronounced when compared to the national standard.

I personally have been employed at State Hospital North since September, 2022. Last year when CEC’s were administered, I was listed as a temporary employee therefore did not receive a CEC. That being said, I

feel like my pay should have been adjusted when I went full time to reflect the CEC that I did not receive.

To maintain a high standard of care and to attract and retain qualified professionals, it is imperative that we address this issue promptly. As you may be aware, Idaho's current wage rates lags behind the national average, putting us at a disadvantage when it comes to recruiting and retaining employees. This not only impacts the quality of services we provide but also the overall atmosphere and effectiveness of our facility.

I propose that we work towards bringing all employee wages up to the national average without considering individual merit as the primary factor. While recognizing the importance of rewarding exceptional performance, I believe that a uniform increase will not only boost employee morale but also foster a sense of equity and unity among the staff.

Investing in our workforce is an investment in the success and reputation of State Hospital North. By aligning our compensation with the national average, we not only demonstrate our commitment to our employees but also position ourselves as a competitive and attractive employer.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

300 Hospital Dr, Orofino Idaho 83544

To whom it may concern,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to express my concerns and advocate for a fair change in employee compensation within the State of Idaho's personnel system. As a dedicated

employee, I believe it is crucial to address the challenges faced by workers, particularly regarding the current hourly wage that is proving insufficient to cover the basic cost of living.

Living as a single parent in Idaho, I have personally experienced the financial strain caused by the existing compensation structure. The current hourly wage falls short of meeting the rising costs of housing, food, and other essential expenses. It has become increasingly challenging for me to provide a stable and comfortable living environment for myself and my family.

Idaho is a wonderful state with much to offer, but the disparity between the current wages and the cost of living has created a significant hurdle for many hardworking individuals and families. I believe that a fair increase in employee compensation is not only warranted but essential to fostering a thriving workforce and maintaining a high quality of life for all residents.

A reasonable adjustment in wages would not only alleviate the financial burden on employees but also contribute to their overall job satisfaction and productivity. Moreover, it would allow individuals like myself to afford basic necessities, including adequate housing and nutritious food, without constant financial stress.

I urge the Change in Employee Compensation (CEC) Committee to carefully consider the real and tangible impact of the current compensation structure on the lives of employees. By advocating for fair and just wages, the state can demonstrate its commitment to the well-being of its workforce and, consequently, the prosperity of the entire community.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I trust that the CEC Committee will take the necessary steps to address these concerns and work towards a positive change in employee compensation within the State of Idaho.

Sincerely,



Psychiatric Technician-State Hospital West

Good Morning,

I would like to address the state employee retiree health insurance options. In looking at retirement- Blue Cross insurance for Retirees increased 30% FY 2024, with the state paying only \$100 per month toward this, as I contacted office of group insurance, I was told the state has not increased the amount they pay towards the premiums in years. Does the state review changes in compensation for State Employees who are looking at early retirement?

In looking at retirement and calculating the \$1,200 dollar premium for 1 month of coverage of health insurance for FY 2024, It is in the classification of unaffordable insurance as due to the high price tag.

The cost of Heath Care changes the ability of State Employees to retire unless they can pay for the high price tag of insurance.

I strongly encourage you to address the retiree health insurance compensation and make changes, accordingly.

The state has great benefits if you are a current employee. It is a totally different perspective in looking at retirement for state employees.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

Hello,

I would like to provide some information that would be important for the committee to consider.

Several large nursing associations have done market research for nursing wages. American nursing association is a good key example. According to research, several states like Idaho are far behind in nursing wages compared to national averages.

Some other key components to consider is the nursing shortage nationally that is anticipated to get worse over the next several years. Which will likely continue long term over the next decade or two which will effect our healthcare systems long term. Due to the nursing shortage, and the private and federal sectors paying more for nurses to stay competitive, it's possible state's will not be as competitive for nurses since the beginning of COVID. I hope states advocate and make decisions soon to be more competitive in recruiting and retaining the nurses they do have.

Other information to consider is inflation and cost of living. With state employee wages below the private and federal sectors, it's making it increasingly difficult for state employees to have even an affordable wage to maintain a healthy lifestyle or to even raise a family.

Thank you

[REDACTED]

Hello Legislators,

This is the first time I have submitted testimony of any kind to Idaho legislators.

Please approve the FY2025 CEC Recommendation. Idaho State workers have exceptional benefits as you all know and while that used to be a strong draw for workers, other companies have caught on and have vastly improved their benefits packages while maintaining much higher pay rates. Idaho State workers' pay lags far below our competitors in the health industry field and we lose a lot of workers to St. Als and St. Luke's, particularly since those companies' benefits have increased.

Additionally, teleworking has been a strong draw to IDHW and hiring has improved. The staff are still highly productive and more inclined to stay despite much lower pay than the private industry. With the pending change in teleworking policy, we are going to lose a lot of staff as teleworking has become a norm in the private industry. While those jobs do not have as good of benefits, they do have teleworking and much higher pay to their advantage. The pay difference is such that staff can buy equivalent benefits and still be paid more than they would at the State.

Finally, the cost of living in Idaho has massively increased and workers have moved to more affordable rural areas to be able to afford to keep their jobs. Now they face a lengthy and dangerous commute to an IDHW office. Competitive pay is necessary to keep those workers who could find a better paying job, potentially with teleworking benefits, rather than trying to commute to our crowded urban areas.

Please help us keep our employees whose passion and quality of work is unmatched.

Thank you,

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Management Assistant

Idaho Dept. of Health & Welfare | Division of Behavioral Health

450 W. State Street, 3rd floor | Boise, ID 83702

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

I am writing this testimony in response to the meeting to review the State's change in employee compensation. I have worked for the Department of Health Welfare Family and Children Services Region 2 and in the last 5 years I have witnessed the overturn of 35 employees in all positions of FACS. With the rising prices and inflation increasing over 6% in 2023 and expected increases in 2024, our cost of living increases are not keeping pace and not helping with the retention of skilled employees. According to your brochure, my wages are 20% less than the 50th percentile in the state of Idaho. At this point, at 9 years of service, I could make more at McDonalds. The current pay rate for a job dealing with families, drug and alcohol abuse, second hand trauma from horrifying child injuries/abuse causes significant emotional impact, not to mention the backlash from families in a rural community both at work and at home. I hope that during the meeting, the management takes the time to consider that competitive wages are needed to retain skilled individuals for long term employment.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Idaho Department of Health & Welfare

Division of Family and Children Services

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Hello,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written comments to the CEC on the 2024 CEC recommendations. I am writing because I feel that I can provide 2 perspectives, One as a current Supervisor, and the second as an individual who is at the cross roads of his career.

I currently work for the Department of Health and Welfare, division of Medicaid, as the Healthy Connections Value Care Supervisor. This program has had a lot of legislative and external stakeholder eyes upon it in the last year. HCVC, along with many other programs within Medicaid, require technical knowledge and skill sets in order to administrate the program effectively. Hiring prospective employees with this knowledge and skill set is hard to do, due to the wages offered by the state. We are unable to compete in the private markets sector, even with the benefits we receive. Pay discrepancy off sets our current benefit package. This makes it hard to administrate a program effectively. HCVC is a program that is being tasked with more responsibility, with the inability to provide the correct staff. We are looking at a large number of individuals who have been with the state a long time, retiring in the next couple years. However, individuals are not applying for these open positions due to the wage compensation.

The second area that I can provide commentary on is as a 35 year mid-level professional looking at his career path. I love the job that I do, I enjoy the challenge, and I enjoy that I am helping Idahoans in both providing care, and helping tax payer dollars be spent wisely. However, my personal career is directly

influenced by the legislative ability to provide compensation. The private sector offers higher pay that offsets the state benefits. With the rise in inflation, this gap is becoming more and more apparent and makes it harder to stay with the State. Even with PERSI, the amount I could make in the private sector, invested properly, offsets what PERSI can offer someone. One of the remaining perks that offsets this pay discrepancy is the option for full time telework. With the future of this perk being unclear, it adds another factor as I look at my personal career development.

I would urge the CEC committee to pass compensation recommendations that keep-up with inflation. Or introduce a process that explicitly accounts for inflation. The current structure encourages job hopping as the only way to increase ones earning potential, which is not sustainable for Idaho government programs.

Thank you for your consideration.

[REDACTED]

To whom it may concern,

I have worked for the state almost 4 years now and there is no other job I've enjoyed more than the one I currently do. The team I work with is amazing and supportive - But due to some major life changes I have had to consider leaving the department to find something with higher pay.

When I started working for the state, my household was a two income home with 1 child and things were manageable however over the last year I had a new baby and the father of my children passed away very suddenly and unexpectedly. This has forced me to seriously re consider my current job as I am just *barely* making enough in my position as Technical Records Specialist to support my family alone.

This work we do in family and children services is something I would love to continue to be a part of but unfortunately due to the rise in the cost of living and other expenses it may not be a feasible option.

I would like to ask the committee to seriously consider raising the pay wages for support staff.

I know I am not alone in this, as many other support staff have mentioned similar struggles with the pay wage. As a single mother of 2, I have been forced to look into higher paying jobs and assistance from the state as the wages I take home do not cover all of our living expenses.

I love my job, my team, this program and what we do to help our families, and I would love to stay in this program as long as it is feasible for my family.

Thank you for your time 😊

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] *Specialist 1*

Department of Health and Welfare

Family and Children Services

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I am writing this testimony in response to the meeting to review the State's possible change in employee compensation. I work for the Dept of Health and Welfare FACS as a PSR in Region 2. I have been an employee of the State of Idaho for the last 5.5 years and the last 4.5 of which have been as a PSR. I the time I have worked at FACS, I have personally witnessed a large turn over rate, 35 people in all positions of FACS have discontinued their employment with the State of Idaho. Working in FACS, no matter your position, exposes you to substance abuse, horrific child injuries/abuse, and second hand trauma of all types. Region 2 is a very small rural area and there is constant backlash from both the community at large and families we interact with and/or have interacted with in the past due to our roles and the work we do. The second hand trauma takes a toll by causing a negative impact both at work life and in personal lives. The wage compensation with the State currently pays less than the private sector, which pays more and the stressors are increasingly less. In addition, the cost of living wage increases we do receive, are not even close to the actual rate of inflation in the US. Also, something that should be taken into consideration, is that fact that the State needs to be able to offer competitive wages in order to attract and retain skilled individuals who will become long term employees.

Thank you for your time

[REDACTED]

Children and Family Services

Region II – Lewiston

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

To whom it may concern,

Good morning. I have worked for the Department of Health and Welfare for the State of Idaho for almost 5 years. My 5th anniversary will be in April of 2024. I am a Self-Reliance Specialist, Principal in the division of Welfare. My job is to work with Self Reliance Specialists around the state who interview and work with customers directly to issue state benefit programs: Food Stamps, Medicaid, Cash Assistance, and Child Care. I help them understand our processes and ensure casework is correct. I also work with new hires and support them through the new hire process. Although it may sound simple enough, determining accurate benefits is not an easy job. It requires skill, patience, and attention to detail.

In my time with Self-Reliance, I have seen multiple people leave to go work in Washington, where our job has a higher payrate. This makes me so sad to see because I take such pride in working for a state with accuracy, timeliness, and case work so pristine in comparison to the rest of the country. With each new hire class, I sit in and listen to a guest speaker from our Quality Control team who talks about how well we do in Idaho vs. other states. Our timeliness in Food Stamp issuance tops the nation. Our accuracy is amongst the top states as well, if not THE top. In fiscal year 2022, SNAP payment error rates had a national average of 11.54, Idaho was at 3.44. Yet, we have these AMAZING employees always thinking in the back of their mind... they aren't being paid enough in comparison to other roles or even other states who do the same work. I think if our program performs as amazingly well as it does, these are people we would really want to keep/hold on to. A company/department/unit is only as successful as the people who work within it. We need to stop losing good people and do everything we can to keep them!

In my role I am part of the management team in my region, and I see the turnover firsthand. I am just sending this in hopes I can shed some light on the need for higher pay as a tool for employee retention. We need it in Self-Reliance.. to keep our new hires, and to keep our current superstars. With results like that...they 1,000% need to be recognized!

(Please see the data below).

Thank you for listening,

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

Self Reliance Program

[Redacted]

Dear CEC Committee,

I work for State Hospital West as a RN.

I took a \$1000.00 a month pay cut to come to work at SHW.

I was told that the benefits make up for the cut in wages.

This is only partially true as the cost on living in ADA and Canyon Counties as skyrocketed.

I am in my 60's, single, and if I had a family to support, I could not do it on my current wage with the price of rentals in the area.

In addition, SHW is having an extremely difficult time hiring nurses due to the low wages. When we can't hire nurses, we have no one to cover staff nurses, and this leaves the unit short if we are ill, have doctor's appointments or family emergencies.

I myself missed a trip to visit my daughter, who lives out of state, for Christmas because even though I had Christmas day off, there was no one to cover my other days off.

I work with wonderful dedicated Psych Techs whom have young families, and I have no idea how they afford to live and take care of their families. From the things I overhear them say, it seems that most of these folks could not work at SHW without the help of their relatives.

My request is that you please increase Employee Compensation so that SHW can retain the great people that work here, and offer more competitive wages to attract more wonderful people to work with these traumatized youth.

SHW is a beautiful facility, and this is without a doubt a worthy cause.

Thank-you,



Dear Employee Compensation Committee,

I would like to express my appreciation for extending an invitation to employees to share our thoughts on the topic of the state's compensation.

I am new to working for the State of Idaho and am truly thankful for my job but can honestly say I had doubts coming to work here because of the wages. One of the reasons I am here is because I believe in the mission of DHW that *"We help people help themselves. Our goal is to help people become self-reliant, working with them to identify issues and solutions to their problems so they won't need future assistance from us."*

As you are aware, the cost of living in Idaho has gone up considerably but the wages have stayed the same, making it difficult for the employees who help the people of Idaho become self-reliant to make ends meet on their own basic needs in life. In my department, we have a higher turnover and are short staffed as we cannot keep good people due to the lower wages offered by the state. I and several of my coworkers have taken second jobs to help bridge that

gap in our lives financially, which in turn creates an additional deficit as this is taking away time from our families.

I want to thank you for looking into employee compensation and for allowing employees to share our thoughts and concerns regarding this subject.

Respectfully,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

Family and Community Services

3402 Franklin Road, Caldwell, ID 83605

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Hello,

I am providing feedback on the CEC recommendations for this year. Firstly, I'd like to address the timing of the request for recommendations, which occurred just a day before the Christmas holiday and during the New Year period. Such timing is not conducive to fostering a positive work environment, and I urge that this be avoided in the future to demonstrate genuine consideration for our state employees.

In terms of compensation, I strongly recommend that the CEC considers a substantial increase of at least 5% for state employees, taking into account the challenges posed by inflation and the pressing issue of retention. Many of our dedicated employees are not only fulfilling their designated roles but also assuming additional responsibilities due to staff shortages. The current state of retention is alarming, primarily attributable to the inadequacy of our compensation packages compared to the demanding nature of the work.

It's noteworthy that the federal government recently announced a 5.2% increase for federal workers. This decision underscores the recognition of the importance of adequately compensating employees. The high turnover we are experiencing could be mitigated significantly by addressing this crucial aspect of job satisfaction.

Given the surplus in funds, it is only fair and reasonable to allocate a more substantial increase in pay. Failing to do so not only jeopardizes the well-being of our workforce but also places Idaho at a disadvantage in terms of competitiveness. Over the past five years, pay increases have been minimal, and it's crucial that we rectify this to ensure that our employees are not only valued but can also lead a stable financial life without resorting to living paycheck to paycheck.

In conclusion, I implore the CEC to take into serious consideration the current challenges faced by our state employees and to prioritize a meaningful and just pay increase that reflects their dedication and hard work. It is an investment not only in the well-being of individuals but also in the overall success and competitiveness of Idaho.

Thank you.



IDAHO STATE
**HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

[REDACTED]
State Historic Preservation Office

[REDACTED]
Hello,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on CEC recommendations.

I have observed a high rate of turnover in some positions. It is difficult to serve citizens in the way they deserve to be served under these circumstances.

I believe a higher rate of pay with the accompanying funding would help resolve this situation.

Being allowed flexibilities like telecommuting can help compensate for lower rates of pay. If the intent of in-office workers is to provide better services to Idaho citizens, consider evaluating which positions really impact citizens face to face. Don't make a blanket recommendation about telework.

I would argue citizens are better served when we are able recruit the best person for the position. Providing a competitive rate of pay, and offering flexibilities like telework will help attract and keep high performing candidates.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED] idaho.gov

These comments are made as a private citizen.

First – thank you for targeting the 50th percentile in the future rather than the 25th percentile. This will help a great number of Idaho state employees who deserve a decent salary.

I recommend utilizing percentages for salary increases rather than a fixed dollar amount. As one of the higher paid state employees, getting a raise that is approximately \$1/hour is insignificant and insulting.

I have a doctorate degree in pharmacy and have been a licensed pharmacist for over 30 years so I bring a lot of valuable experience to my role at the state. The non-competitive salary at the state as compared to what I could make in the private sector is the main reason that I have looked and will continue to look at other job possibilities. The market total compensation comparing Idaho to the P25 Private and P25 Public sector at the higher pay grades is very significant and needs to be improved.

I also strongly agree with funding additional market based increases for positions in IT, Engineering, Nursing, and Healthcare in order to be able to attract new employees and retain current employees. When I have shared salary information with fellow pharmacists not working for the state of Idaho, I end up being depressed as they are consistently making significantly more money than I am. I have also been upset when looking at the salaries of pharmacists working for the Idaho School of Pharmacy and realizing how much more money I would be making if I chose that career path rather than being drawn to working at Health and Welfare. I have equivalent education (both PharmD degree and a clinical residency) to those pharmacists but am paid significantly less.

[REDACTED]
Pharmacist - Pharmacy Services Specialist

Idaho Department of Health and Welfare
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

I am writing this testimony in response to the meeting to review the State's change in employee compensation. I have been employed as a CST with Family and Children Services in Region 2 since August 2019. During my employment there has been a large turnover in the department staff. The stress that comes with working in Family and Children Services is not compensated adequately. Yes, our benefits and retirement are good but wages should be raised to retain good, reliable workers. We are currently understaffed in Region 2 and have not had luck getting applications for the CST or Social Worker positions.

The starting CST wage is comparable with a fast-food worker's wage. Before our last wage increase I was making \$2 an hour more than my 14 year old granddaughter who was employed by Sharp's Burger

Ranch. Obviously the responsibility for a CST is much more: transporting our vulnerable children, testifying in court when needed, interacting with family members, and maintaining confidentiality. In addition we clean and maintain the visit rooms to ensure that the rooms are safe and welcoming by having toys and books that are age appropriate and encourage interaction between parents, giving our families the chance to play and enjoy visit time while developing crucial parenting skills. We work closely with Infant Toddler Program, Parents as Teachers and other programs. As a CST I have been asked to transport not only our children in Foster Care but their parents as well. Many of our parents suffer from mental health, anger, and substance abuse issues. I have heard heart wrenching stories of abuse from some of the children I transported. I have transported a parent that was cussing, yelling, flailing their arms and crying on the way to/from a visit, it was a long 3 hours. At times the stress is physically and emotionally overwhelming and I wonder if my wage is worth it.

With the cost of living raising, everything from housing to groceries, we need a raise to keep and fill the positions at Family and Children Services.

[REDACTED]

Family and Children Services

Region 2-Lewiston

[REDACTED]

Hello,

My name is [REDACTED] and I a Certified Recreational Therapist here at State Hospital West. I am here to say that I think State Employees need to start making more. My time here is the hospital I have seen people leave due to the lack of money. Therefore, the other employees are now having to compensate for the lack of people, in which people are leaving due to not making enough. I have seen it time and time again.

As well, I am a single man who is still living paycheck to paycheck. I am tired of living in this economy as a state employee and not having enough for food, gas, rent, phone bill, and just trying to live. If there is any a question if we should be making more, should not be a question, but how much more. We need to live and Idaho is not getting any cheaper. If you want to keep people, not just thinking of them as a number, then help us have a rage that is livable.

Love a man who is just trying to make ends meet,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

CEC Committee

In my 12 years of working in Orofino for the State of Idaho, we've always had problems with employee compensation rates not being among the average rates for our area when compared to the private sector. We've always heard the line about taking benefits into account and to a certain extent, I do agree that has some bearing on wages, but never has it been more obvious that we are not able to hire many of our positions because their hourly compensation does not compute with wages offered among the local private sector, especially in today's economy. As employees of the state, we are told to get approval to work 2nd jobs or side jobs that provide extra money for paying mortgages, going on vacations etc. The State of Idaho wants its employees to consider their employment their primary career, but in many cases, the salaries provided by State of Idaho employment do not equate to the median annual income for the state and many lower-level positions are at or below the poverty rate. In today's economy, people cannot pay bills and heat their homes with benefits, especially when at or below the poverty rate. In my department's case, due to ongoing unfilled positions, we work overtime but all comp time and on-call time is banked as time off, not paid out which isn't ideal for our department either, when the few people that *are* working, are off on vacation which makes the few remaining staff have to work more overtime, creating a vicious cycle. If state employees are supposed to consider their employment their career, we feel the lowest level position salary working for the State of Idaho should meet the median wage for the State of Idaho.

Many people are working below the poverty rate at our facility and we have extreme difficulty filling those high turnover positions time and time again. In our facility, these positions are held by Custodial and Dietary workers. A large portion of our employees at State Hospital North must also commute to Orofino for employment, this creates a negative hiring rate for positions at our hospital in the first place, much less the lower-level staff working at poverty rates, these are both negative values that must be considered when working for the State of Idaho at our facility. Many higher-level staff at State Hospital North live in Lewiston (the largest city closest to Orofino) which makes their commute nearly 100 miles per day, people in these positions also struggle to find it beneficial to commute this distance even for the higher annual wage in the current economy, the wage barely outweighs the cost and danger of commuting that distance. Many of our facility's lower-level positions (Custodial/Dietary) commute roughly 60 miles round trip to work. At State Hospital North, it's been becoming more evident to all of us in HR and Management that if wages for those poverty-rate positions do not increase at some point soon, I'm sure it will affect the business operation at State Hospital North due to the lack of staffing and the inability to provide proper provisions to our patients as a result.

Thanks for allowing us to provide our input, in today's economy, I believe the State of Idaho is at a turning point for facilities like ours, we face setting the mark in Idaho for employee compensation or I feel the State of Idaho should consider closing some facilities like State Hospital North due to the

inability of hiring and retaining dedicated employees to work at our facility and continue to provide proper treatment to our patients.

Let me know if you need any further clarification or have questions.

[REDACTED]
Physical Plant Director, State Hospital North
300 Hospital Dr, Orofino, Idaho 83544

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
CEC Committee

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commuting that distance. Many of our facility's lower-level positions (Custodial/Dietary) commute roughly 60 miles round trip to work. At State Hospital North, it's been becoming more evident to all of us in HR and Management that if wages for those poverty-rate positions do not increase at some point soon, I'm sure it will affect the business operation at State Hospital North due to the lack of staffing and the inability to provide proper provisions to our patients as a result.

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Let me know if you need any further clarification or have questions.

[Redacted]
[Redacted]

300 Hospital Dr, Orofino, Idaho 83544

[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]

Hi There!

I am in full support of the merit increases/raises for this upcoming year 2024. As you may have heard for a longtime, pay has not increased with the increased rates of cost of living and although I am an independent with no dependents, I can't help, but feel happy for this opportunity for merit increases for 2024 as I know many of my coworker, who do have dependents, are in need of it and would greatly appreciate and benefit with this increase. Not only this, I have known a few coworkers who have resigned from Idaho DHW to work in Washington as CDA is near the Washington-Idaho border. I feel that this merit increase should be pushed and supported because there is a large incentive for workers who live near Idaho-Washington border to look into Washington for job opportunities. If we want to keep our workforce, I feel this merit increase is necessary. Furthermore, I would like to see and push for an increased in wages for those who have their Masters' degree in the Social Work field and are licensed at the Master's level. I feel that this would help with retention rates as workers better themselves and further their education while working for DHW. Not many workers who have their Master's in Social Work or related fields stay with the Department as there is not a pay increase from another coworker that is licensed at the Bachelor's level. I am not sure if this is the email to push for such agenda, but wanted to bring it to the committee's attention regardless.

Thank you for your time and respectfully,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Idaho Department of Health & Welfare
Children & Family Services
1120 Ironwood Dr., Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Morning,

I am not sure what all I am supposed to say in one of these, but I can say having been with the state for 18yrs of service, I feel we should get more than a 3% raise with the rising cost of everything.

I know this may not be the right department to bring this up too, but maybe you can help change it. I work at State Hospital South and we have a hard time retaining nurses and Psych techs. The employees in the temp pool should have more than part time hours to use every year, as the good ones burn through their hours way before their hours reset and then we have to go through the whole hiring process again if they come back, as well as we hire new employees to replace them and most often they don't last long. We need some temp positions that it does not matter how many hours they work, they do not run out of hours. I personally feel the Temp staff need to make as much the full time staff. Most hospitals pay you more when you work temp hours, not less like us.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

RN- ADM

Hi,

I also wanted to add that in my opinion, CEC's should not be merit based or based on your performance evaluation rating. Some Bureaus don't allow you to get exemplary as there is always room for improvement. Therefore, I would never be able to get the maximum raise.

Thank You!

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Division of Medicaid

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Hello Change in Employee Compensation Committee,

I am [Redacted] and I work as an RN at State Hospital South. I like my job, but due to my family's circumstances, we live 50 miles away in Rexburg. I make the hour long commute each day, but with the cost of gas and wear and tear on my vehicles, it would be greatly appreciated if I and my fellow coworkers who make these long commutes could be compensated for the mileage we put on our vehicles. I suggest either having a fixed amount per mile, such as 30 cents per mile or an increase in the hour wage to assist with gas. Please strongly take this into consideration for all of us faithful employees at the State Hospital who must drive so far. Thank you!

[Redacted]

Hello, thank you for taking the time to review any thoughts/suggestions towards the CEC. With the rising costs of everything getting a boost in pay is always extremely helpful to stay afloat and much appreciated. One thing that has always been an issue is to get the pay scale more reflective of longevity workers. For instance those that are just starting, at least in my department, start off at a much higher rate of pay than I of course did in 2006. At any rate, thank you for your consideration and I am hopeful that this year will offer a positive change in CEC.

Thank you,

[Redacted]

Resource and Service Navigation

FACS Region III

3402 Franklin Rd

Caldwell, ID 83605

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]


Good morning,

I have been a Self Reliance Specialist with DHW for 2.5 years. The one thing about this position that I believe most people don't understand or take into consideration when they think of it is the volume of

information each of us have to learn, understand, and use on a daily basis. This is truly the most difficult job I have ever had. I am still learning new things about the work I do.

I realize one of the goals of the State is employee retention. We all do important work that comes with a great deal of satisfaction from helping others in need. However, the bottom line for any type of employment is the pay. We do not come to work each day just for the satisfaction. Even with the pay increases over the last few years, The pay scale for my position is still considerably lower than neighboring states. We have a difficult time keeping employees simply because the pay does not match the amount of or the difficulty of the work this job requires.

In my opinion if the State wants to attract quality employees, retain them and the current employees, It will need to be more competitive with the pay.


Thank you for this opportunity to send written testimony regarding the state's personnel system and employee compensation.

I enjoy living in and working for the state of Idaho. I also appreciate the opportunity to provide information and assistance to residents who rely on the services we perform.

As an employee, last year's merit-based increase and Change in Employee Compensation (CEC) appropriated by the Legislature was much appreciated as it helped offset the higher cost of living and created a more competitive wage that is an enticement to maintain state employment and recruit new workers.

Overall, wages for employees in the public sector are lower than equivalent positions in the private sector, but the benefits package has been a major incentive to work for the state. Attracting new employees in today's market is challenging. A general cultural shift nationwide seems to be that workers are targeting income over benefits. This can be for many reasons, but I believe the increase in cost of goods and services, and the desire for a better quality of life are foremost. Being a seasoned worker, I value my benefits as well as my wages. That said, it is becoming increasingly difficult to pay my bills due to inflation. Telework has eased the financial strain by limiting expenses for car maintenance, repair, and gas. It has also reduced the need for a large business wardrobe. Additionally, I find my quality of life has increased because I spend less time commuting. This allows me to spend more time with my family, get more sleep over the course of a work week, and accomplish more home maintenance items. Lastly, I feel more productive in my daily work tasks because I have fewer interruptions than in the office environment.

Please consider again a FY2025 cost of living and merit-based increase that will allow for rising inflation and propel wages to a competitive arena in today's economy. Please also consider a continued telework policy that will be viewed both as a financial and quality of life benefit for existing and potential workers.

Thank you for your time reviewing my testimony.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Director's Office

Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

450 West State Street, 10th Floor

Boise, ID 83720

[REDACTED]

Good morning,

Our Human Resources Officer at DEQ invited us to provide input regarding the state employee CEC for next year, and I wanted to take a minute to send some thoughts:

I am the primary earner for a single income household, and my wife and I have chosen to raise our family here in beautiful Idaho. We love it here, and I enjoy the work I do for the State of Idaho helping to protect public health and our environment to keep Idaho a great place to live. When we as State employees accept a position with an agency, we understand that we are not going to be amongst the top earners in our respective fields; there are other benefits to the work, culture, and agency mission that make that OK for us for various reasons, and we are willing to accept that.

However, these are unique times we live in and despite recent cooling inflation continues to be much higher than it has been in many of our lifetimes. We have seen it creep into daily life: the cost of groceries, household supplies, kid's clothes, gas, etc. have increased with no sign of coming back down, forcing tough decisions to be made on a daily or weekly basis. Given the way the pay structure is set up here at the State, we rely on the annual CEC to help ensure that we are able to at least keep pace with the increasing costs of living so that we can continue to live our lives without feeling like we're getting further behind. If our pay can't even keep up with paying for our basic necessities, it makes it more and more difficult to justify the "other benefits" of working here. As an engineer, the chasm between what we are paid as state employees and what would be available externally is stark, and even though I really enjoy what I do it leads to regular assessments of my family's financial position and what might be best for us. After all, most of us are professionals who pursued higher education in an effort to ensure quality of life and increase our earning potential. In my 6+ years with DEQ, I have seen a lot of turnover, and I understand that the reason behind much of that turnover is often rooted in salary and earnings. It's hard to blame anyone for pursuing better opportunities if they become available.

I would like to respectfully request that the CEC committee elect to proceed with a CEC equating to inflation plus an additional amount to help invest in the State's workforce. It's not too much to ask that our paychecks at least have the same spending power, never mind trying to get ahead and provide for our families, and additional investment in the State workforce above and beyond the bare minimum of inflation is overdue and would be welcome. Done right, proper compensation adjustments will improve morale, help to curb the rampant turnover in the state workforce, and to increase personnel and knowledge retention within agencies. In the end, that will help us to provide better service to the people of Idaho, which is what we are here to do in the first place.

Thank you for your consideration.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Idaho Department of Environmental Quality

Boise Regional Office
1445 North Orchard Street Boise, Idaho 83706

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
www.deq.idaho.gov/

CEC Committee:

I am writing to you in regard to State of Idaho Employee Compensation. I am the Water Quality Coordinator for the Department of Environmental Quality of the State of Idaho. My team works hard every day to help ensure that surface water quality is improved or maintained as well as ensuring as a state we are following federal Clean Water Act requirements, creating and implementing a new statewide surface water database, working diligently to ensure that polluted waters in Idaho get monitoring and action to restore back to water quality standards.

I manage two incredible employees in the state office who are dedicated to this work of improving water quality in Idaho for all of us to enjoy. Poor financial compensation in these positions have resulted in incredible turnover in our agency/programs/teams, consistently being upwards of 60%. It's incredibly hard to do good science and keep momentum and positivity up with this turnover due to low compensation. The continued rising costs of Idaho cost of living, make it impossible to live here. So let's reward those that are here, let's show our appreciation for the truly hard work and dedication that goes into these positions, and let's retain the valuable employees that want to remain in these positions.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

[REDACTED]

[TMDL and Water Quality Trading Programs](#)

Idaho Department of Environmental Quality- State Office

1410 North Hilton St., Boise, Idaho 83706

[REDACTED]
<http://www.deq.idaho.gov/>

Note to the Legislators

I have worked for the State for a little over 5 years now within the Department of Environmental Quality. During this time, I have seen an alarming amount of turnover. Retention discussions are ever present in our management meetings and are at the forefront of concerns for our managers, especially those involved in the any aspect of the hiring process. During said meetings benefits are usually brought up at some point as a counter argument for paying State employees higher wages. However, as an employee, I also see year after year my cost for benefits raising in tandem with whatever CECs are offered. CECs are not a luxury item that provides State employees with a “cushion” it is a lifeline to keep us afloat. This is the bare minimum that can be accomplished for State employees without forcing them to seek employment elsewhere. At the end of the day a great mission or sense of public service will not retain employee if they cannot adequately provide for their family. Without CECs the state will continue to experience turnover, not only costing the state the experience gained from seasoned staff members but also causing real actual costs when considering the manhours and capital it takes to acquire and train new staff.

Cheers,

[REDACTED]
Idaho Department of Environmental Quality

650 Addison Avenue W., Suite 110

Twin Falls, Idaho 83301

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
www.deq.idaho.gov

Hello,


I would like to share my personal opinion about employee compensation. Since the implementation of Luma, my job has become so much more stressful, and the increased daily stress has really taken a toll on my body. As one co-worker recently commented, and I can agree with this statement “Luma is killing me.” I personally have seen my daily stress level increase since the implementation took place in July, and my health has been greatly affected. I feel like I have aged 2 years in 6 months due to most days being max stressed. The things that my doctor recommends (medication, massage therapy, counseling, etc.) cost money that I do not have. I do not feel that the 5 allowed EPA counseling sessions are enough

for those dealing with the continued Luma stress. I feel that one allowable session per month would be more sufficient to help us during this stressful transition.

Pre-Luma I was able to avoid a costly gym membership by doing activities on my own, but since Luma, not having a gym membership is no longer an option if I want to try and combat the stress in the healthy way. This costs me \$40 per month, but is a healthier way to deal with the stress rather than some of the other ways that I have seen others coping, such as getting on or increasing medication dosages, binge eating, drinking, etc. If we could get a discount at local gyms, this would be great; or if not, I feel that asking for increased pay to help with these increased costs that we are facing to deal with the increased stress would be helpful.

The people that I work with are all very smart and dedicated employees. We are loyal to the state and would like to stick it out and stay, but we would also not like to have our lives cut short and experience increased health problems by having such stressful work circumstances. We keep showing up and I feel that our bodies are paying the price. The options offered through Blue Cross are small discounts on expensive online exercise classes. I've tried that route, and they are very hard to stick with and are not for everyone. I take part in most if not all of the state offered wellness opportunity programs like Wondr, and while I appreciate the helpful tips offered, I feel that I am already doing all of the recommended things, such as eating as healthy as I can afford, working out, etc. We are giving our all to the state and in return I ask that we be given the tools to stay healthy, be given enough compensation to afford healthy food and living situations.

Thank you


Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
1410 North Hilton St., Boise, Idaho 83706


www.deq.idaho.gov

To the Members of the CEC Committee:

I submit this written testimony from my perspective as a section manager and supervisor for maternal and child health programs. Over the past few years, I have seen the value of telework for hiring and retention of employees as a benefit similar to others we have like PERSI and paid leave. The opportunity to work hybrid schedules has broadened our candidate pool and enabled us to hire qualified staff around the state of Idaho with local knowledge and investment in their communities. This diversity strengthens the services we provide and helps us better fulfill our mission as a statewide agency. We have robust policies and practices in place for onboarding, supervision, and

monitoring to ensure staff are fulfilling position expectations. I encourage committee members to keep in mind the value added through teleworking as you consider the state's personnel system and employee compensation plan for SFY2025.

[REDACTED]
Maternal and Child Health – Section Manager

Division of Public Health

Department of Health and Welfare

[REDACTED]
Hello,

I'm writing to encourage the CEC Committee to recognize the value in recruiting and retaining quality state employees, directly through competitive wages, benefits, and the inclusion of telecommuting options for those within and outside of the state. In my 9th year working for DHW, I can tell you that I would likely not have stayed beyond 5 if it weren't for the committee's recent effort to increase wages to a competitive level **and** the policy which allows me to work from home. Over the course of the last 3 years I was promoted to a manager, achieved job performance evaluations at the highest rating, and helped develop statewide programs that will not only impact infectious disease burden in Idaho, but the way the state will respond to future outbreaks. None of that would have occurred if I wasn't given the benefit of telecommuting, as I would have likely moved on to a higher paying private-sector position.

It's imperative that the CEC Committee understands that telecommuting is not a luxury benefit, where the quality of work falls off and employees become complacent. It's vital to consider telecommuting and wages as foundational to making the State of Idaho an employer of choice. More integral to recruitment and retention than anything else.

Having been with the Division for the past 9 years, I've become close with many of my colleagues. I can say that most of them (including those in leadership positions) have already started exploring other jobs, in the event that IDHR eliminates the remote work option. The sentiment I keep hearing is, "if the salary isn't going to be competitive with private sector jobs, and telecommuting isn't an option, I'd rather work in an office for a company that pays me well".

Needless to say, hiring, onboarding, training, and accounting for the time it takes new employees to acquire skills for the job, would have a dramatic impact on the quality and effectiveness of the work. Showing state employees that they are not only valued, but respected and trusted enough to work remotely, will elevate Idaho as a forward-thinking employer of choice.

Thank you for your continued support of state employees and the effort to recruit and retain them.

Kevin

[REDACTED]
Idaho Division of Public Health

450 W State St – 4th Floor

Boise, ID 83702
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

I work for IDWR and I feel that we are compensated pretty fairly for the most part. I think that a slight increase in funds would be beneficial for all staff in our department to combat the rapidly increasing cost of living, particularly housing. State employees in areas such as Boise are facing a housing market that is daunting and at times hopeless. I'm very grateful for IDWR and the State of Idaho and the opportunity I have to serve the public in my capacity.

[REDACTED]
Water Resource Agent | Adjudication Section

Idaho Department of Water Resources | 322 E Front St, Boise
[REDACTED]



To the CEC Committee:

In the last few months the pharmacy brought to my attention that a change in covered costs for some Tier 3 medicines occurred during the last health plan renewal and this has led to approximately a 30% reduction in costs covered by Blue Cross for my medicine. Prior to July 1, 2023 my copay for the medicine I take was \$60 per four-week period. After July 1, the costs increased to \$1,052 per four-week period (thirteen periods/yr) or \$13,676/yr.

Fortunately, the manufacturer has a copay program that will cover most of the yearly costs. However, this copay program has an income limit and if I was to get married to my fiancé we would exceed that limit and the result would be having to come up with the copay amount (approximately 25% of my current take home salary). There is a second copay program through the pharmacy, but I have not yet been given the conditions that this copay assistance may cover. This is not a practical choice to have to count on copay cards that could be cancelled or revoked at any time to cover such a large cost difference in copay costs from one year to the next.

Please note the cost from FY23 to FY24 that the pharmacy pays or the cost that Blue Cross sees for the medicine did not change (approximately \$3,500 per 4-week period), only the cost that Blue Cross covers

changed. I want the committee to understand the substantial change that occurred with the latest health plan renewal. I don't know if the committee made these changes or if they originated at the OGI during plan renegotiation, but they definitely have stressed me out. This medicine is not a luxury, it is the only thing that allows me to function in the way I did prior to my having this condition.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment on the CEC.

Sincerely,

[Redacted signature]



[Redacted address line]
Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
2110 Ironwood Pkwy
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814
[Redacted address line]
[Redacted address line]

Greetings Ms. Otto and CEC Members,

As state employees have been invited by the CEC to provide testimony concerning Idaho's state personnel system and employee compensation. I would like to take advantage of this opportunity to share my appreciation for some key features which have greatly enhanced retention and work/life balance in my staff.

DHR Statewide Telework Policy:

The implementation of a statewide telework policy has greatly enhanced the ability to attract and retain the most dedicated, talented and experienced staff who would otherwise pursue employment with competitors who offer both higher pay and telework options. In my experience people who would prefer to work in the public sector and support service implementation for the benefit of all Idahoans often choose a more palatable option with higher pay and telework options-especially in light of the exceptional increases in cost of living within the Treasure Valley. We have lost multiple competitive candidates for vacant positions and existing staff for these reasons in the past. The option of telework has allowed managers to recruit more competitive and qualified applicants and greatly increased morale and productivity within our existing workforce. As a manager I have greatly appreciated experiencing zero turnover in staffing since the implementation of telework along with increased morale and productivity among my staff.

Idaho State Employee Benefits:

As a manager for the past 13 years I have witnessed many employee life situations including illness, death, national competitions, exceptional family events, marriages,

births, etc. Many of these situations were unplanned and unexpected and due to prudent management of sick and vacation time accrual staff were able to accommodate time away from work to participate or provide support if needed without experiencing additional sources of stress or worry. Many staff have school-age children and/or family members who participate in sports and rely on strategic usage of accrued vacation time to be able to travel for events in addition to the option of planning a vacation. The ability to accrue earned sick and vacation time is an invaluable component of the state's benefits package. A potential removal of this benefit would likely result in significant impacts to the workforce in the form of additional employee stress and trauma and turnover due to more attractive benefits options outside of state employment.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on these topics.

Most Sincerely,



Dear Legislators,

As you consider this year's CEC, please weigh the impact your decision will have on the entire state. I urge you to do as much as possible to help state employees navigate Idaho's growth and increasing cost of living.

The state MUST keep up with the rapidly increasing cost of living to contribute to the success of all Idahoans. Employees are struggling with the basics: buying homes, paying rent, and affording groceries. The stress of financial insecurity can add to physical health problems and mental health issues, which also impact employee retention and morale. Employees are leaving to find higher-paying jobs, and positions remain vacant due to lower wages. Prolonged vacancies burn out current employees and cause lower morale and higher turnover. These issues can directly impact the agencies' ability to provide services.

State wages were behind the curve before the pandemic, and inflation and increased home prices and rental rates have only exacerbated the issue. Increasing compensation for state employees directly improves their quality of life, creates more opportunities for the little Idahoans they are raising, and increases the quality of service provided to the Idahoans they serve.

Thank you for your time as you consider this important decision.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I find it upsetting and sad that the legislative action for CEC is usually significantly less than the DHR and Governor's recommendations.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Dear Committee Members,

I just wish to make several short statements:

- The Social Security Administration has approved a 3.2 % increase for Social Security for 2024.
- I am confident that all of us are aware every time we get groceries, or even get a fast-food lunch, that 3.2 % barely scratches the increased cost of food.
- Gasoline and diesel are the only items that are giving us some reprieve from inflation, but we all know that it is only temporary.
- Please give serious consideration to a CEC increase greater than 3.2% so we don't fall behind.

[REDACTED]

Water Resource Agent

Southern Region

[REDACTED]

To: CEC Committee

I am writing to this committee to emphasize the importance of attracting and retaining highly qualified employees. While the PERSI retirement program is very attractive to employees, it is not enough to offset the lower salaries the state pays compared to private and public sectors. Additional ideas the state should consider to remain competitive with hiring, recruiting and retaining staff include allowing teleworking and increasing sick and vacation accruals. Continuing to allow teleworking demonstrates respect for employee time, skills, and contributes to reduced traffic in severe congestion areas like the Treasure Valley. Discontinuing teleworking will cost employees more, which is essentially a pay cut due increased travel/gas costs and time lost to commute. Many state programs work primarily with agencies and stakeholders across Idaho and the nation. Even if required to work from a state office location, almost all of the work will be conducted virtually. It is very short sighted to remove the teleworking option when the type of work is appropriate for remote work. To ignore the value and savings of teleworking to individual employees and the state is not responsible management of government resources and if eliminated it will have a negative impact on hiring highly qualified talent and retaining experienced staff. In addition to continuing to increase salaries, please consider bolstering employee compensation by increasing sick and vacation accruals and supporting teleworking for positions that conduct their work state and nation-wide.

Sincerely,

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Bureau of Clinical and Preventive Services | Division of Public Health | Dept of Health and Welfare
450 W State St, Boise, ID 83720 | [Redacted]

Hello,

I am writing this testimony in response to the meeting to review the states Change in Employee Compensation. I've been employed with Lewis-Clark State College and IDHW for the past 6 and a half years I have been with the Department of Health and Welfare: Family and Children Services, I have witnessed an overturn of thirty-five (35) workers in the Region 2 area. The primary reason the child welfare social workers have left is the overall lack of increase(s) in pay to work related stress. To my knowledge and experience, we have lost them to "Child Welfare" neighboring states, in which, they have received \$30,000.00 - \$40,000.00 increases in employment pay. We must remain competitive with our hourly pay rate, or we will continue to lose more highly qualified and skilled child welfare social workers!

With the rising prices of food and daily supplies increasing over 6% in 2023 and expected to increase for 2024 to be from 2-4% yearly increases are not helping with reasons for retention of skilled child welfare social workers. I'm deeply committed to the great state of Idaho, however, I realize that compensation ensures employees are valued and retained! Child welfare social workers are first

responders to an Idaho family home with concerns for parents actively using drugs, second hand trauma from horrifying child injuries or in a rural community the backlash from investigations with our current pay rate make many relocate, to slightly lower paying jobs, or same pay with significantly less stressors. I hope that during the meeting this is reviewed that management takes the time to consider more than just wages to retain skills individuals for long time but the need to recruit others to apply using our benefits and the potential competitive pay rates as being below the 50thtile does not encourage our employees. Thank you for being open to feedback and for your time.

Best regards,

[Redacted]

Child Welfare Caseworker
Children & Family Services
Region II – Lewiston

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Please note these comments on the Change in Employee Compensation and Benefits Report FY2025

I came to work at the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare almost two years ago. The reason I sought a job at IDHW was for the health benefits, excellent PERSI program, and the opportunity to serve my fellow Idahoans. I did not come to work here for the hourly wage, which is not competitive in my field.

The other main attraction for me to work at IDHW was the opportunity to telecommute. I work a hybrid schedule one day a week in the PTC office, the rest in my home office. I have found that I am much more productive at my home office as there are fewer distractions and much less noise. I would have to call in sick far more often than I have done if I could not work from home, and do not have issues with arriving late due to commute problems or bad weather.

Telecommuting is a major issue in my continued employment at IDHW.

[Redacted]

Idaho WIC Program | Division of Public Health | 450 W State Street, PO Box 83702 | Boise ID 83702-0036

[Redacted]

I would like to contribute to the discussion regarding the continuations of remote/telework. I have been working for the State since 2006. I started working at the local level in Public Health District role, then went

on to a role at the Department of Finance, before going back to Public Health at the state level with a position at DHW. I keep returning to Public Health because my heart is with the people in the communities that I have worked to assist.

During the pandemic, I, like many others, contracted COVID-19 that developed into long COVID. At one point I was unable to go longer than 9 weeks between hospitalizations. As a result, I am now considered medically disabled. Throughout the day, I regularly used different medical equipment to manage and monitor my vitals. The lack of accessibility to necessary equipment outside of my home poses a challenge when it comes to venturing into public spaces, as it is crucial for my health and helps prevent hospital visits.

The building that I would be most likely be told to return to is one that I have worked in before. The building was constructed in the 70's during the age of asbestos and halogen lights. It was not uncommon to walk on to any floor of that building and see large chunks of lights covered or turned off due to migraines. I have done fire drills at this building prior to the pandemic. If there was an emergency and the building needed to be evacuated, I would need to find a spot in the outside stairwell, and hope that any rescue services found me before any emergency happened.

Fortunately, having the ability to work remotely has provided me with financial stability to support my family. Moreover, it has given me the flexibility required to attend doctor's appointments and attend to my body's needs while being a contributing member of society. Given my current circumstances, I am uncertain about my ability to return to working in a physical office like I did prior to my disability.


Syringe Exchange Technical Records


Pronouns: she/they/them (*what's this?*)

To whom it may concern:

Last year's CEC is appreciated, and this year's recommendations are positive and reassuring to the current workforce. As a dedicated public service employee, I want to continue working for and helping my community. I am only able to do that as long as pay rates and benefits continue. Cost of living continues to be a concern in Idaho, and is at top of mind. Benefits like vacation, health insurance and PERSI are very important, but do not help me keep food on the table for my children. If those benefits were not as stellar, though it would be even more push to make additional money at a private employer. However, when I took my current position it was based on a telecommuting policy that may no longer exist. I took a pay cut because the time I saved in commute and the money I saved in gas, offset the pay rate. If we are expected to return to an office that requires lengthy commute and increased expense, the pay will need to match. Currently, many other employers in the Treasure Valley allow telecommuting or hybrid schedules and offer increased pay in the private sector. As the committee reviews plans and makes decisions, telecommuting needs to be factored in to the decision. It will be important to determine the cost to replace the workforce that may leave¹ as a result, especially if benefits are reduced

or pay raises are not implemented (to cover new expenses and cost of living). I appreciate your consideration and time.

Happy Holidays.

[Redacted]

DIS Program Specialist
Idaho Division of Public Health
450 W State St – 4th Floor
Boise, ID 83702

I would like to advocate for a change to the employee compensation rate. Due to the rising cost of living, it's hard to get ahead or break even. Housing costs and rent have skyrocketed while the price of groceries have also increased dramatically. This increases are expected to continue increasing by another 2-4 % over the next year making it difficult for our families to keep up. In Region 2 alone, we had approximately 35 employees leave their positions primarily due to finding higher paying jobs with less work-related stress. In addition, we as child welfare social workers, have some of the most difficult jobs emotionally and mentally. Please consider these circumstances when considering employee compensation rates.

Thank you,

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Children and Family Services
Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Good afternoon, legislators.

I am writing to share my thoughts about the CEC recommendations. I have been employed with IDHW for almost 5 years. During this time, I left for 9 months to work with Infant Toddler Program, and this summer I followed my heart and returned to my previous position as a Child Welfare case manager. Leaving Child Welfare was a difficult decision for me as I am passionate about my work with families in

this capacity. The stress and secondary trauma are real and very difficult at times, especially in a small community where we often see these families when we are not working. I have laid awake at night pondering what could have been done differently, if the absolute best decisions were made, and if there was anything that was missed in making life altering decisions for these families. The cost of living is increasing constantly and our pay is not keeping up with this. Please consider pay increases that will allow for greater staff retention in this field and for these front line workers to have greater access to resources to offset the trauma and stress we face everyday.

Thank you for your consideration and time reading our testimonies.

[REDACTED]

Region II Child Welfare Social Worker
Idaho Department of Health & Welfare
Division of Family and Community Services
1118 F St
Lewiston, ID 83501

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Hello members of the CEC committee,

I am an Assisted Living Surveyor with Licensing and Certification and work at the PTC bld downtown. I have recently joined an employee engagement committee where we are trying to identify ways to keep all the awesome employees DHW has throughout the state. A questionnaire was sent out to employees asking for feedback on what would make them stay in their position. Many staff responded that they wished they had higher pay along with other things. We asked for the feedback but unfortunately this is something we can not do anything about. We are currently working hard to come up with other creative ways in which the DHW are appreciated, supported and thriving. I hope you take this testimony as an example of the tremendous work we all do for the public.

[REDACTED]

Surveyor, Residential Assisted Living Facilities Program
Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

[REDACTED]



Good afternoon,

I am sending you my testimony in response to the "Change in Employee Compensation (CEC). Based on my personal observation, in the 9 plus years I have been with the Department both as an intern and employee, I have seen a revolving door of employees leave Idaho's Child Welfare. Those who left, left for higher paying jobs with less stress. Our job is high stressed, demanding, and time sensitive, which does not match the pay. However, Social Workers like myself, and my team are dedicated to our work and the families we serve. It is my hopes that committee will take into consideration we are "Front Line" workers and our pay should reflect our unique skill set, our exposure to secondary trauma, and the potential danger we face when meeting with families on an investigations due to DV, drug use, and/or their dislike towards Child Welfare. I would also like to add, with the ongoing cost of living rising at an exponential rate with no signs of relief, it is extremely challenging to break even. In essence, if the state of Idaho intends to retain hardworking, educated, and fully dedicated employees, then they are going to have to show they are valued through a pay increase.

It is extremely disheartening to learn our pay rate is well below the 50th percentile.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

1118 F. St. PO Drawer B.

Lewiston, ID 83501

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I am an employee in an entry level position with the State fresh out of college. I have a young, small growing family. I don't expect much because I am just starting my career, and I know that things will get better as I work my way up and grow in experience and take advantage of training opportunities. However, due to the increase in cost of living and housing in Idaho and the surrounding areas, I am just making ends meet at home. We have enough to live on, but we have had to dip into our savings a few times to cover unexpected expenses a typical young couple with children would expect. We cannot afford to buy housing in Idaho at this time. We are renting an old manufactured house from our relatives for the time being until we can save up enough to buy our own place. I commute from out of state to work. In good weather it may take me 45 minutes to get to work. In bad weather it has taken me as long as two hours. Last winter I did not make it to work several times due to snow and ice. We hope that as I progress in my career we will eventually be able to afford to buy a place of our own closer to work. This would remove many of the stresses and challenges that I am facing working for the State. My gas bill

would go down, I would have more time to spend at home after work, and I would not have to worry as much about commuting to work in the winter. I'm not complaining, but I hope that this testimony will help you to see and understand some of the challenges facing some employees working for the State of Idaho right now. I feel that if potential future employees are offered enough to afford housing close to work that the state may see an increase in their staffing. The benefits are good, but the challenge of finding a place to live in Idaho at the current wages offered is difficult.

[REDACTED]

Water Resource Agent

Idaho Department of Water Resources, Preston Field Office

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Hello,

My name is [REDACTED]

I am a Human Services Supervisor in Boise for the Client Service Technicians.

The purpose of my email is to advocate for the Client Service Technician team.

During my short time working for DHW I have taken the time to understand the work of the CST's. I have taken the time to delve in and deeply understand what CST's are up against in this position and I have taken a small caseload of visits. I substitute when they are sick or for other reasons to ensure to the best of my ability that the visits with the parent and child occur.

I have learned so much of what issues the CST runs into, how they are dealing with them and what resources are available.

I have quickly jotted down a few things to explain why I feel the CST's need an increase in their wages, along with additional training.

The safety and welfare of CST's regarding angry, hostile parents is on the top of the list.

Since I have been here, I have had one parent shove me while angry. I have also dealt with parents who have had heightened, and angry behaviors due to their children being pulled away from them.

There are parents who have been known to carry a gun or have other weapons with them as they enter a visit. They are allowed to bring drinks, vape pens, and food to visits without a way to determine if there are drugs/alcohol in these items.

CST's are confronted by parents who are under the influence of drugs and or alcohol, have mental health concerns, and/or are not stable causing erratic behaviors causing an unsafe environment.

CST's are responsible to ensure parents do not run off with the child in custody. CST's are responsible to confront parents when they are interacting with the child inappropriately and ask them to stop the interaction whether verbal or physical.

When parents bring out items that can be used as weapons, or if they have weapons, CST's are still responsible to communicate when improper communication occurs.

While security is available, the security officers are limited on how much they can protect the situation.

The CST's are also responsible and liable for the health, safety and welfare of children from the time the child is dropped off or picked up by a CST for a visit, until the child is back in the foster parent's care.

CST's are liable to ensure the health and safety of the child during travel. It is up to them to ensure car seats are properly installed based on manufacturer and vehicle regulations.

Most or all of the children are traumatized with mental health concerns of their own. Some children can be easy to work with and others are not.

Some behaviors CST's are challenged with when taking on the responsibility of transporting the child; triggered behaviors causing self-harm or harmful to others, unbuckling and get out of their car seat while traveling, non-stop screaming, will not get into their car seat, throwing themselves to the ground, refusing to get out the car, dumping food or drinks in the car.

Some child behaviors during visits can be; Throwing furniture to the ground or at others, breaking toys, Running out of the visit room and refusing to go back, yelling, screaming, or withdrawn.

CST's need to be flexible with their time as they travel a large amount to drive children to visits, appointments, school etc. This is completed with the challenges of traffic, car problems, bathroom stops, behaviors, etc

The responsibilities create an emotional toll that separates many people from being able to fulfill the CST position. It requires a separation of personal feelings, and requires CST's to have unbiased customer service at all times.

In visits CST's observe emotional baggage from parents, trauma from the children and it is often the CST who are left to listen to parent and child frustrations, confusion and behaviors.

CST's are to observe all safety concerns, actions and goals of the parents that shows how progress is happening for the case. Often they are subpoenaed to testify in court for cases they have been a part of. When this happens, it does not matter if they are on vacation or scheduled to work, they must make arrangements to attend.

CST's are given minimal training on how to handle extreme behaviors, yet they do it to the best of their abilities.

CST's are responsible for giving guidance to the parents for visits to assist them in meeting the goals that were set up by case management with minimal training tools.

-parenting, diapering, feeding, nurturing, hygiene, different ways of meeting the child's needs, proper attire, language, etc.

CSTs are responsible to take care of the vehicles, keeping them clean and gassed up. The car seats to be properly used and cleaned.

CST's are to clean up spills or messes in the cars due to illness or behaviors.

CST's are to work to keep the toys clean and the visit rooms deep cleaned.

CST's are asked to make themselves available to the Case Management team when they have availability.

It is the CST responsibility to stay current, and have input based on their observations regarding goals, safety, etc. to the cases.

CST's are responsible for scheduling, canceling and communicating with all parties regard the visits of the cases.

Prior to my arrival, CST's were responsible for covering their own shifts and caseloads when sick. It is too challenging to require this, and does not allow the staff to take time to recover appropriately.

Currently they are still responsible for covering their caseloads when going on vacation.

While I have been the supervisor or this position I have come across these situations that are cause for high turnover:

-Some staff who have attempted to cheat the time card and were terminated.

-Staff who are traumatized because of their own personal triggers with visits, and were not able to fulfill their visits.

-Staff who have felt they cannot survive on the wages.

-Staff who started the work and right away could not accept the emotions weight and toll it had on them.

This email entails a sum of the responsibilities of a CST. It is not a 100% description as all cases are different, meaning there are continual changes in circumstances.

The current wage is not enough for a person to live on with the large rise in the cost of living. It is near impossible for a single person to have their own apartment.

I would like to propose an increase in wages for the CST's. At least \$18. Per hour for the reasons already stated.

I would like to emphasize that the knowledge, and emotional stability CST's need to have to fulfill their duties appropriately is vital for success.

They are the front runners of court ordered visitation between parents and their children.

Benefits of a wage increase:

*To reduce the high turnover.

Reducing time and money it takes to interview and hire new CST's.

Reducing cost of training new employees.

Reducing number of background checks due to less turnover.

Allow training needed for long term stay employees.

Skilled employees will feel safer and have knowledge of how to handle high risk or dangerous situation.

Skilled employees will have knowledge of how to redirect situations within the visits.

*Positive morale of employees.

Home life improvement.

Employees will want to stay.

Greater commitment to the state goals for children.

I am willing to discuss this further and do what I can for these staff.

Thank you for your time reading this.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

1720 Westgate Drive Suite D, Boise, ID 83704

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[Redacted]

Hello,

I am writing this testimony in response to the meeting to review the states Change in Employee Compensation. Over the approximate 1 and half years I have been with the Department of Health and Welfare: Family and Children Services, I have witness an overturn of eight (8) workers in the Region 2 area. Of these amount of workers that have left the primary reason has been lack of increase in pay to work related stress and risk of safety. With the rising prices of food and daily supplies increasing over 6% in 2023 and expected to increase for 2024 to be from 2-4% yearly increases are not helping with reasons for retention of skilled employees. I have worked with the Department through my schooling and accepted the IV-E scholarship in return for promise to work for the state. This promise is what helps me stay with the State as being a first responder to a family home with concerns for parents actively using drugs, second hand trauma from horrifying child injuries or in a rural community the backlash from investigations with our current pay rate make many relocate, to slightly lower paying jobs, or same pay with significantly less stressors. I hope that during the meeting this is reviewed that management takes the time to consider more than just wages to retain skills individuals for long time but the need to recruit others to apply using our benefits and the potential competitive pay rates as being below the 50thtile does not encourage our employees to stay with the Department with the risks it holds with intervening with families and individuals actively using substances, having mental crises, and has unpredictable behaviors all which we often respond too alone past initial safety response.

Thank you,

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Idaho Department of Health & Welfare
Division of Family and Community Services
1118 F Street
PO Drawer B
Lewiston, ID 83501

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Hi Christine,

It is no secret that Idaho state employees face significant challenges when it comes to compensation. Our salary structures fall behind what is being offered in the private sector and even lag the federal government's pay scales. This wage disparity has taken a toll on our ability to both attract new talent and retain our existing highly skilled workforce. As a hiring manager, I faced significant challenges hiring top talent for Idaho DEQ due to salary discrepancies coupled with the high cost of living in Boise.

Additionally, retaining our existing employees has also become a challenge. Talented professionals who have dedicated years of service to our organization are leaving for higher-paying positions elsewhere. It's disheartening to see valued team members leave due to financial concerns when we would prefer to retain their expertise and experience within our agencies. This issue affects not only our recruitment efforts but also the overall morale and job satisfaction of the remaining employees. When talented individuals leave for higher-paying opportunities, it creates gaps in our workforce, disrupts productivity, and leads to increased stress and burnout among the remaining team members. These remaining employees are often tasked with completing the work of 2 to 3 other vacant positions without an increase in their pay.

I strongly believe that addressing this salary discrepancy is crucial for the long-term success and effectiveness of all state agencies. It is essential to consider implementing strategies that enable us to offer competitive compensation packages, acknowledge the value of our workforce, and ensure that our employees are fairly compensated for their skills and dedication.

Thanks so much for your time and attention to this matter.

[REDACTED]
Idaho Department of Environmental Quality

1410 N Hilton St, Boise, ID 83706

[REDACTED]
www.deq.idaho.gov

Pronouns: she/her

Improve morale, support work-life balance ethic, attract and retain talent at all levels of state employment – without increasing wages: adjust Vacation/Personal Time Off accrual for Covered, Non-Exempt and Administrative/Professional staff.

Currently:

- Executive/Exempt level immediately begin accruing 7.7 hours vacation per pay period, regardless of length or hours of service.

- Covered, Non-Exempt and Administrative/Professional staff accrue vacation based on length or hours of service.
 - Covered, Non-Exempt (3.7 hours/pay period – 6.4 hours/pay period)
 - Administrative/Professional (4.6 hours/pay period – 6.4 hours/pay period)

Recommendation:

Streamline vacation rate of accrual across length or hours of service for all staff levels, after a new employee successfully completes his or her probationary period. This is a benefit/compensation that does not require any increase in wages. This would be closely competitive with private sector companies who offer full vacation benefits on day one of employment. This would also be a statement that Work-Life Balance truly is important for ALL STATE EMPLOYEES and not just the executives or those who have served more than 5+ years. As a person in my mid-late career years, it was a financial, emotional, and mental punch to learn my rate of vacation accrual would not increase from 4.6 hours/pay period until after 5 years of service. I started working for DEQ at the beginning of summer vacation, I could not take any substantial vacation with my family the first year+ unless I took it without pay. I had left my prior employer after almost 16 years of service where new hires started day one with four weeks of vacation, only to begin work at State of Idaho like I was fresh out of school getting my first job and having to wait a year to take a one or two week vacation. Taking one or two days off occasionally after beginning at a State position, negatively impacts that ability to save up for a family vacation or for needed time to disconnect from work.

The current vacation accrual does not recognize the ***value for ALL EMPLOYEES to take personal time off from work***. It only acknowledges Executives’ as needing time away, and on top of that at a higher accrual rate of 7.7 hours/pay period.

This recommendation is not asking for an accrual rate equal to that of Executives (7.7 hours/pay period). This recommendation is simply to recognize that lower-level employees’ need personal time off as well – start new staff at 3.7 hours/pay period or 4.6 hours/pay period accordingly. After successful completion of probation, allow staff to accrue 6.4 hours/pay period.

Thank you for your time, very respectfully,

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
1410 N. Hilton St., Boise, Idaho 83706

[Redacted]

This letter is to address the opportunity to discuss the state's personnel system and employee compensation.

Idaho strives to hire, pay, and retain employees but things need to change for that to happen. I work in a field office with a 50% vacancy rate and am currently working to stay focused on working on backlog due to staffing shortages. We have been trying since July to get new employees but the current hiring practices and the problems with LUMA have created problems in getting new employees. We have recently had several of our positions posted to the public but whether we can get qualified applicants is questionable. If you want good quality people to work for the state, then you must make the decision that you will need to pay more money to get these people. There is just no way around it. I believe that the hiring process from top to bottom needs to be looked at and streamlined. If the people in HR need more people to help make the process more seamless, you hire them.

As for employee compensation, that's a touchy subject with people. With the current state of the economy and inflation, pay raises do not keep pace with inflation. With the prices of housing, food, gas etc., many people feel the pinch of not having enough money to afford to keep pace with the changes in the economy. Housing is too expensive to buy or rent for many employees to transfer within the state for better opportunities. For myself, my biggest challenge is the one-hour drive to work each way between Preston and Montpelier. I cannot afford at this time to move to Preston to be closer to work so I must do the daily commute. I view that my time that I drive to be very valuable in the fact that I spend almost 12 hours a day between driving and working for the state. Fuel becomes very expensive to make a 96-mile round trip trek to go to and from work every day.

Idaho's biggest competition is with the private sector and the higher wages that the surrounding states provide for employees. As great as the benefits are they do not pay the mortgage, put food on the table and put fuel in my vehicle to drive to work. A \$1 pay raise or more for an hourly employee can make the difference on whether they can put food on the table, it can help alleviate some of the stress they have about staying as an employee for the state. Still more needs to be done to make working for the state a positive experience.

Thank you,



Technical Records Specialist 1

Idaho Department of Water Resources, Preston Field Office

325 East 600 South, Suite 300

Preston, ID 83263

[REDACTED]

I have a couple things that I believe will make employee compensation more attractive for current employees and prospective employees. This comes from working with other government agencies within the state and modeling the similar packages.

Healthcare – employees currently contribute a portion of their paycheck for healthcare costs and having the state pay the employee only portion of all plans.

(approximate calculations) (PPO - medical 65/month and dental 11.8 = 76.80) 76.80 x 25000 state employees = \$1,920,000 additional per year to provide every state employee with company paid insurance. Spouse, child/children and family would still be paid by the employee.

Additionally, there’s quite a few employees that have healthcare covered from the military or other means. It would be beneficial to work a deal with the health care agencies to not pay the employer contribution which would save a considerable amount of money but then approve a reimbursement (let’s say \$200 a month) to the employee for not using the benefit.

VAC/COMP time used to compensate for holiday time adjustment when on a 4-10 schedule – This recommendation also comes from other government agency policies. Currently, I’m on a 4-10 schedule and when there’s a holiday, I can take it off and I only get 8 hours of holiday time which I completely agree with. However, I am required to use two hours of my vacation/comp time to supplement with the holiday time to get my 40 hours for the week. It would be beneficial to give the employee the option of using 2 hours of VAC/COMP time as it is now and also allowing the employee to go 2 hours short on their paycheck and save the VAC/COMP time they’ve accrued

[REDACTED]

Idaho Public Utilities Commission
11331 W. Chinden Blvd., Building 8, Suite 201-A
P.O. Box 83720
Boise, Idaho 83720-0074

[REDACTED]

As the committee is set to meet soon, I am writing this testimonial to give my insight to the Idaho Department of Corrections. Prior to my move to Idaho, I completed 23 years as an Arizona Department of Corrections employee where I retired as an Associate Deputy Warden. During my tenure I went back to school and obtained three degrees. Approximately two and half years ago I contacted Director Josh Tewalt regarding the possibility of future employment with the agency. As a courtesy Mr. Tewalt set up a meeting with Mr. Chad Page. I was under the impression that our meeting went well so I left my resume and work achievements as a

reference. I was under the impression that he was going to notify me of a particular position that would be available in the future, unfortunately that never came to fruition.

As time went on, I applied for various positions. To my surprise I was not contacted once for an interview. At one point I reached out to find out why I was not considered for the position that I had applied for. The HR representative stated that my requested salary was too high for that position (pay range was up to 28 an hour, I put 30 as my desired wage). I was surprised by the comment because I was informed by an Idaho Department of Corrections employee (Chad Page) that the department would pay extra for someone's experience.

I did not let the negative response deter me, I continued to submit applications. I applied for and requested information for positions ranging from Correctional Officer to Administrator. To this day I still have not received an interview. I reached out to Mr. Chad Page and Mr. Josh Tewalt to see why I cannot get an interview, I have yet to hear back. I have attached my previous correspondence for your reference.

Obviously, this type of treatment can deter one from applying to or staying with an agency. Furthermore, I worked for Lancaster County Corrections (in Nebraska) after my time with the Arizona Department of Corrections while my son worked with the Nebraska Department of Corrections; all the forementioned agencies have a higher salary than the Idaho Department of Corrections. The discrepancy in pay is concerning since the cost of living is so much higher in Idaho.

I hope this information provides some insight into why there is a vacancy rate within the Idaho Department of Corrections.

