



REPRESENTATIVE BILL THOMAS

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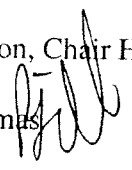
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MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 25, 2009

TO: Representative Seaton, Chair House Education Committee

FROM: Representative Thomas 

RE: HB 58 Student Loan Repayment Program

Attached please find three potential amendments to HB 58. I have drafted them as three separate amendments so that the committee may accept or reject each of the proposals individually. The amendments are as follows:

- 1.) Amendment #1 changes the eligibility criteria to include applicants who work in fields that have been determined jointly by the Commissioner of the Department of Administration and the Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development as having a shortage of qualified employees working for the state.

I have worked with both commissioners on this amendment and we are in agreement that this is the proper way to proceed at this time. This allows for both departments to work together in determining the employment needs of the state government and also allows for the eligibility to change as the needs of the state change. This is also consistent with the findings of the working group established by A.O. 237 (also attached) which state that a loan forgiveness/repayment program may help in recruitment for state jobs.

- 2.) Amendment #2 establishes a cap of \$50,000 for the amount of the repayment benefit that each student may receive. For most applicants this will either be the entire amount of their student loans or a good chunk of it. It will also allow the state to better estimate how much a program like this will cost.
- 3.) Amendment #3 reaffirms that this program is not an entitlement and the commission may cancel or modify a person's repayment benefit at any time. This language was suggested by the Post Secondary Education Commission in order to make it clear that they are not obligated to pay a benefit where there are prohibitive circumstances. This program is subject to appropriation by the legislature and I want to make it clear that should the

legislature fail to make an appropriation, the commission is then not obligated to continue with the program if there is no money to fund the program.

Further, after discussions with the commission, the point was well made that if the needs of the state change and they are locked in to making payments to students for positions that are no longer lacking, the whole impetus of the bill may be lost. While they are using up funds for positions that are no longer in shortage, they may end up having to short fund applicants who are filling positions that are currently in high demand.

This amendment makes it clear that the commission is under no obligation to give out a repayment benefit where there is no longer a need or where there is no longer funding available.

AMENDMENT

OFFERED IN THE HOUSE

BY REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS

TO: CSHB 58(), Draft Version "P"

1 Page 3, line 29, following "hired":

2 Insert "by the state"

3

4 Page 4, line 2, following "employed":

5 Insert "by the state"

6

7 Page 4, line 8:

8 Delete "in"

9 Insert "by"

10

11 Page 4, lines 9 - 11:

12 Delete "by the Department of Labor and Workforce Development as having a shortage
13 of qualified employees in the state"

14 Insert "jointly by the commissioner of administration and the commissioner of labor
15 and workforce development as having a shortage of qualified persons available to be
16 employed by the state"

A M E N D M E N T

OFFERED IN THE HOUSE

BY REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS

TO: CSHB 58(), Draft Version "P"

1 Page 4, line 13:

2 Delete "on annually over a period of not more than six years. The maximum annual
3 repayment benefit under this section is"

4 Insert "in an amount not to exceed \$50,000, payable by dividing that amount into
5 annual payments to be paid over a period of not more than six years, as follows:"
6

7 Page 4, line 18:

8 Delete "principal plus accrued interest"

9 Insert "loan balance"
10

11 Page 4, line 20:

12 Delete "principal plus accrued interest"

13 Insert "loan balance"
14

15 Page 4, line 22:

16 Delete "principal plus accrued interest"

17 Insert "loan balance"
18

19 Page 4, line 24:

20 Delete "principal plus accrued interest"

21 Insert "loan balance"
22

23 Page 4, line 27:

1 Delete "principal plus accrued interest"
2 Insert "loan balance"
3
4 Page 4, line 29:
5 Delete "principal plus accrued interest"
6 Insert "loan balance"
7
8 Page 4, line 31:
9 Delete "principal plus accrued interest"
10 Insert "loan balance"
11
12 Page 5, line 2:
13 Delete "principal plus accrued interest"
14 Insert "loan balance"
15
16 Page 5, line 4:
17 Delete "principal plus accrued interest"
18 Insert "loan balance"
19
20 Page 5, line 6:
21 Delete "principal plus accrued interest"
22 Insert "loan balance"

A M E N D M E N T

OFFERED IN THE HOUSE

BY REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS

TO: CSHB 58(), Draft Version "P"

1 Page 5, line 8, following "program":

2 Insert "and is subject to appropriation"

3

4 Page 5, following line 21:

5 Insert a new subsection to read:

6 "(d) A repayment benefit approved under this section may not be construed as
7 an entitlement and is subject to cancellation or modification by the commission at any
8 time."

**Executive Working Group
FINAL Report to Governor Sarah Palin
Administrative Order No. 237
Recruitment and Retention of State Employees**

I. INTRODUCTION:

Governor Sarah Palin signed Administrative Order No. 237 (AO 237) August 24, 2007. The order established an Executive Branch Working Group to address issues concerning recruitment and retention of State employees in the executive branch. The Working Group was tasked with researching and addressing the issue and providing the Governor with recommendations concerning the findings of the order.

A. The Working Group:

A Working Group, composed of seven members appointed by the commissioner of the Department of Administration was assembled to address recruitment and retention issues. The Working Group members included:

- Department of Administration, Commissioner Annette Kreitzer, chairman;
- Office of Management and Budget, Director Karen Rehfeld;
- Department of Health and Social Services, Commissioner Karleen Jackson;
- Department of Public Safety, Commissioner Walt Monegan;
- Department of Environmental Conservation, Commissioner Larry Hartig;
- Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Commissioner Click Bishop;
- Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, Commissioner Leo von Scheben.

The members' combined experience and accumulated knowledge from 75 plus years working in government service and over 75 years in the private sector ensured a broad-based approach to examining the recruitment and retention situation.

Meetings:

The Working Group held a total of four meetings during September and October. In the short time the Group met, we reviewed current State employee turnover rates that were at 16% in 2006, representing the mid-range for states responding to our request for information. As with other states and the private sector, more troubling is the number of State

employees eligible to retire now and in the next five years, and what that might portend for the State's ability to retain experienced, professional employees to balance and mentor less senior employees.

B. Input:

The Working Group polled the Commissioners from each State department for their views on the current status of recruitment and retention of State employees. Each labor union business manager was contacted and requested to give input. Hiring managers throughout State government, who are on the front lines of hiring decisions and frustrations with the current system of employee recruitment, were canvassed for their ideas and comments. The information gathered from the responses was compiled into a spread sheet which organized the data into categories.

The Working Group specifically requested suggestions without a monetary component, but recognizes there are some solutions that are in the monetary category. The State is faced with employee retention issues on both ends of the spectrum from recruitment to retaining knowledgeable, professional employees. The Working Group identified suggestions to quickly impact a majority of problems brought on by a tight salary schedule and personnel rules. Negotiating fair labor contracts is one piece of the financial puzzle, removing an outdated "longevity" step concept is another. These details are included under, "E. Financial Incentives".

C. Supplemental Data:

Appendices include Administrative Order No. 237, State Employee Unions summary sheet and statistics about State employees excluding the University of Alaska, the Legislature and the Court System. Our efforts were focused only on the Executive Branch departments represented at the Cabinet level.

II. IDENTIFY ISSUES AND PROPOSALS:

AO No. 237 charged the Working Group with identifying the recruitment and retention situation, the costs involved in training, changes that will allow the State to effectively serve its citizens while limiting expansion, opportunities for partnering and cross-training and cost neutral or low-cost solutions to increase worker satisfaction.

A. Costs of training new State employees:

Training costs are a significant expenditure for State agencies.

- A recent federal Department of Labor Study shows that turnover costs one-third to one-half times the annual salary of the employee, not including productivity loss.
- The State must clearly define a training/education track tied to proficiency and advancement in a job series. Some level of mandatory supervisory or other training might be necessary.
- The State may need to provide education incentives and professional development in an effort to provide career-long learning opportunities. The practice of providing education incentives among state agencies is currently inconsistent. The Working Group requested and is awaiting a survey of all departments showing what training and education the State currently pays for and what departments believe would be reasonable for the State to undertake.
- **We recommend analyzing the cost of a tuition reimbursement and student loan forgiveness program with payback obligations tied to time on the job, based on a sliding percentage from zero to five years.**
- Many departments have commented that the State has become a training ground for other prospective employers. By retaining employees longer with fair contracts and other potential financial considerations, we will lower our total cost of training.

B. Changes that restrain growth of government:

Even with significantly higher oil prices, today's production is only about one-third of what it used to be.

- The State must focus on the highest priorities by division and department to live within our means.
- Contracting some work out where appropriate, should be considered. This currently requires a feasibility study and could require revision to labor contract language.
- The State spends hundreds of millions of dollars on technology to improve and make public documents more accessible. Some of this technology will automate processes meaning that fewer employees will be needed to manually enter data like timesheets. The State needs to plan with these employees an exit strategy to other available State jobs.

C. Opportunities to cross-train within and encourage efficiencies:

The State cannot continue to heavily rely on retirees to return to work as a stop-gap measure to training new employees.

- Develop and implement knowledge transfer plans for soon to be retiring employees.
- High turnover positions must have a "desk manual" to ensure that the most basic information of the position is available when a new employee is hired. Documenting a high turnover position's responsibilities cuts down on the amount of time spent explaining the duties.
- From hiring managers on up, there must be a frank understanding that many entry level jobs will have high turnover. Accepting this and planning for it, while encouraging entry level employees to move up on a State career ladder, will help retention overall.

D. Cost-neutral or low-cost solutions to increase workplace satisfaction:

The State should continue to encourage work/life scheduling flexibility. Hiring managers particularly noted these suggestions related to flexible work schedules and recruitment efforts:

- Broader use of alternate work weeks (4-10's, 9-80's). Some departments are using flexible work schedules but this could be done on a more consistent basis.
- Encourage consideration of broader use of telecommuting and job sharing agreements. An approach could require employees to complete one year on the job in the office location, and be in the office several days a week as part of a telecommuting plan.
- Establish employee recognition and appreciation programs as part of a statewide culture. Department programs should complement the Governor's Statewide Denali Peak Performance Program. Many Commissioners commented that they look for opportunities to recognize excellent customer service or project work by employees.
- Initiate a health and fitness program as part of the State health benefit package. This could pay for itself over time through healthier employees, less sick leave usage, etc. We will need to work with and coordinate with union health trusts on this issue.
- Provide sabbaticals without a break in service or interruption of health benefits. For example, one month after 10 years, three months after 20 years. These could be used in conjunction with

annual leave for continuing education, travel, or just "recharging their batteries".

III. EVALUATE AND RECOMMEND:

The Working Group was charged with evaluating the hiring criteria and practices, education requirements and minimum qualifications, recruitment tools and whether there are ways to improve upon the merit principle to provide better incentives and retain quality employees.

A. Current hiring criteria and practices:

It will take time to inculcate the ideas we believe will result in efficiencies in the State's hiring practices. The processes in place have resulted from years of patchwork attempts to incrementally fix personnel system deficiencies.

- Revamp the classification process and review adequacy of classification resources in the Division of Personnel and Labor Relations to get through all current and backlogged requests and to be more responsive and proactive to workforce changes.
- Conduct a review of the classification system. Review all job classes, update and consolidate with more generic job classes. Minimize or eliminate single-position job classifications.
- Solicit input from younger workers on what it takes to attract, retain, and satisfy the new generation of workers.
- Encourage a broader use of flexibly classed positions, with easier movement between levels in a job series (i.e. I-II-III). (Current list is included in appendices.)
- Review the effectiveness of the HR integration. This should be scheduled in 2008. There continues to be some concern about the impact of the Human Resources integration and its impact on some departments.

B. Current education requirements and minimum qualifications for state employment:

The State needs to be more flexible in its efforts to attract qualified job candidates. The Working Group acknowledges that not every location in the State is having the same challenges drawing applicants.

- Change minimum qualifications to broaden applicant pools. This is not a "dumbing down" of the applicant pools as suggested by some, but a more strategic approach to actual job requirements.

Some examples include removal of a specific degree requirement (i.e. accounting, biology), and replacing with a general degree with a certain number of field-specific credit hours. Specific degree requirements could also be replaced by technical certification or demonstrated expertise. Several departments requested a minimum qualification waiver process.

C. Recruitment tools:

The Workplace Alaska recruitment portal needs to be changed to be more comparable to and competitive with links like monster.com and dice.com – this old technology is not attractive and does not present the State as a progressive, interesting employer. This change will require more planning as it will impact the Online Public Notice system.

- In the short term, we should enable applicants to post resumes on Workplace Alaska similar to other employment websites.
- Each department should have a web link to jobs available on its main website.
- Formalize employee surveys; upon initial hire, after one month, and/or at a minimum an exit survey upon termination. Some suggested making exit interviews mandatory.
- Encourage broader use of internship program. Partner with the University of Alaska on an apprenticeship program. Streamline internship classification with greater flexibility in I-IV levels.

D. Improvements to Merit System:

Efforts should be made to recognize exceptional work and eliminate barriers to employment and promotional opportunities.

- Provide more discretion for increased pay based on performance. Base performance incentives and service steps on the performance evaluations. Use steps (b) through (f) for performance incentives and steps beyond (f) for service steps. This recommendation cannot work if there is not a concomitant effort to prepare proper evaluations.
- Eliminate pay barriers that discourage employees from taking promotions, i.e. not enough pay for the added work and responsibility, loss of over-time pay, if applicable, etc.
- Expand our ability to promote existing employees. In some cases it is easier to hire a new State employee at an advanced step (based on recruitment difficulty or exceptional qualifications).

- Analyze the effectiveness of continued use of market-based pay adjustments. This process addresses specific pay issues but disrupts internal alignment and creates supervisor differentials.

E. Financial Incentives:

In certain areas, the State has become a training ground for the federal government. There is a 24% Alaska cost of living differential between the Federal and State governments that exacerbates this problem.

State labor contracts recently concluded will mean:

1. The 7,920 members of the General Government Unit (GGU) of Alaska State Employees Association will receive a 4% retroactive pay increase contingent on legislative appropriation. The 4% is retroactive to July 1, 2007, followed by 3% increases in FY08 and FY09.
2. The Teachers' Education Association of Mt. Edgecumbe ratified an agreement of a 3% retroactive raise in FY07, followed by 3% in FY08 and 3% in FY09.
3. Labor, Trades and Crafts, Local 71, has ratified an agreement for a two-year contract which includes a 5% increase in FY08 and 2% increase in FY 09. (about 1600 members)
4. Alaska Public Employees Association, bargaining on behalf of the Confidential Employees Association (195 members) ratified an agreement with the State on a three-year contract beginning July 1, 2007 which includes a 4% wage increase on that date, followed by a 3% increase beginning July 1, 2008 and a 3% increase beginning July 1, 2009.

In addition to the monetary components of union contracts the State is a party to, the State makes annual contributions on behalf of each employee to the Public Employee's Retirement System and the Teacher's Retirement System. In the FY09 budget, the State's share of this responsibility for all State employees (union and nonunion) is about \$340 million.

The Working Group agrees that we cannot solve, in this fiscal year, all of the inequities that may have built up over time to make the State a less competitive employer. There are concrete steps that can be taken however, some of which will have long lasting effects:

- Eliminate the outmoded longevity steps where employees go years without a pay adjustment. What was meant as an inducement to retain employees has become a barrier to hiring and promoting professional employees. Removing the barrier can be accomplished in some labor contracts, but the statute (AS 39.27.022) must be updated as employees hired at an advanced step are often frozen at that pay range for up to seven years since the system does not recognize private or other government experience. The removal of this barrier would allow the State to recognize experience and provide merit increments in shorter spans of time. Currently, some employees must wait four, nine and 13 years for a pay increase.
- Salaries for the so-called "non-covereds" or non-union State employees will be impacted by the above action in addition to any changes made to the statutory salary schedule to reflect changes negotiated with union employees.
- HB 98 (CHAPTER 53 SLA 05) increased salaries of commissioners among others, but neglected to include deputy commissioner salaries. For a supervisory track beginning with a new single job classification of Administrative Services Manager, which could lead to promotion to a Deputy Division Director and then to Division Director, the Working Group recommends the following structure. We also recognize that professional job classifications within each agency also provide career tracks to director and other management positions. Any changes to existing positions resulting in increases will be absorbed by existing budgets.

Position	Previous	Current	Proposed	Comment
Commissioner	28E	28-30	No change	AS 39.20.080(a)
Deputy Commissioner		28 A-F	28-29	AS 39.20.080(b) requires legislation to increase
Assistant Commissioner		27	27-28	Not widely used, but can be helpful for very large agencies (e.g., HSS)
Division Director	26	27	No change	Increased Nov. 2006
Deputy Director		23	24 or 25	Implement in FY08-no legislation required
Assistant Director		22	23	Not widely used
Admin. Services Manager/Admin Operations Mgr I-III		22-24	23	Make a single job class to progress to deputy director
Administrative Manager I-IV		15-21	No change	

F. Healthy Work Environment:

We know by surveys and studies that employees value a healthy work environment: One where they are encouraged to be proactive about their own health and if a manager, to model good health habits to their co-workers and subordinates.

This cannot be a mandate. Employees must believe this is also important to their abilities in their jobs. This effort is to support those

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who willingly want to maintain or make a change in their lifestyles to a healthier one.

As the provider of health insurance coverage for active and retired State employees, the State has incentive to look for ways to encourage both populations to be proactive about fitness and good health.

Through the Alaska Retirement Management Board and the Health Benefits Evaluation Committee (created in the Supervisory Union's labor contract, specific to the 5,500 State of Alaska employees and dependents covered by the Select Benefits health plan) recommendations are coming to the Commissioner of the Department of Administration to make changes to the health plans to entice employees to use preventive health and fitness measures, to provide coverage for colorectal cancer screening for retirees, and for well baby coverage for active employees. This work will continue in conjunction with the Governor's Health Care Strategies Planning Council.

IV. Conclusion:

The State can do better as an employer. We've started down a path to improving our stature as an employer with fair union contracts and a culture of high ethical standards.

The Working Group recognizes that the State must have a plan for implementing further change and intends to continue to meet to provide a roadmap to reach our ultimate goal of regaining and maintaining our status as a competitive employer.

There are many ways the State has constrained itself as an employer through our methods of recruitment. Changes will take time, effort and a commitment from State employees to implement. We can change the current situation and do more to provide a healthy work environment for our employees.

The Working Group evaluated suggestions and comments submitted by various groups throughout the State workforce. The many responses touched on in this report serve as a starting point for State action for current employees as well as those who will work here in the future.

Some have suggested that we should immediately initiate a salary survey. It is our recommendation that we focus on changes encompassed in this report over the next one to two years, and initiate a

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salary survey in 2009-10 to help analyze the effectiveness of the changes and identify additional areas needing adjustment.

We encourage all commissioners to carefully review the data available for each department to plan for pending retirements and the knowledge transfer necessary for the State to successfully continue to provide services. The Division of Personnel and Labor Relations will work to streamline this process for departments and provide guidance and tips on successful implementation.

It is imperative that we continue to engage in an open conversation about ways we can improve and continue to meet our recruitment and retention needs.

Action Plan for Administrative Order No. 237

Near Term Actions:

- Continue negotiating and settling labor contracts which are fair and sustainable.
- Prepare legislation to repeal longevity step impediments and replace with a fair alternative.
- Prepare legislation to provide greater flexibility for deputy commissioner's pay.
- Implement deputy director pay increase in FY08.
- Review the training, education and certification survey of all departments and make recommendations for FY09 or FY10.
- There continues to be some concern about the impact of the Human Resources integration and its impact on some departments. A review of the effectiveness of the HR integration should be scheduled in 2008.
- Streamline the intern program process so it is easier for students to come back to work for the State in between college sessions, and it is less cumbersome for those wanting to hire interns.
- Analyze the effectiveness of continued use of market-based pay adjustments.
- Look for opportunities to promote effective healthy living habits that employees can maintain.

Within two years:

- Request funding in the FY09 budget to perform a geographic differential study in accordance with AS 39.27.030.

- Review the history of tuition reimbursement and student loan forgiveness programs and work with the Legislature to determine a flexible plan with payback obligations tied to time on the job, based on a sliding percentage from zero to five years.
- Every department must develop and implement knowledge transfer plans for soon to be retiring employees.
- Every department must continue to audit its use of flexible work schedules (using information already provided by DOA) to determine if broader use of flexible schedules would be welcomed by employees and still accomplish State priorities.
- Revamp the classification process and review adequacy of classification resources in the Division of Personnel and Labor Relations.
- Conduct a review of the classification system. Review all job classes, update and consolidate with more generic job classes. Minimize, eliminate single-position job classifications.

Within three years:

- Conduct a salary survey.
- Replace the Work Place Alaska portal (and the Online Public Notice System).
- Consider legislation to implement a 40-hour work week.

Ongoing Efforts:

- Continue efforts between the DOA and other departments to write less restrictive minimum qualifications for positions, which allow departments more discretion in hiring the most qualified, best person for the position.
- Continue to encourage a broader use of flexibly classed positions, with easier movement between levels in a job series (i.e. I-II-III). (Current list is included in appendices.)

**Administrative Order No. 237
Executive Working Group
Status Report of Recommendations**

The Executive Working Group on Recruitment and Retention set out a list of action items in the November 2007 report to the Governor. These items and their current status are listed below.

Action Items – Near Term

Action Item	Status	Details
Labor Contracts: ASEA-GGU, APEA-SU, APEA-CEA, PSEA, AVTECTA and IBU	Completed	Salary adjustments resulting from HB 417 and labor negotiations have had a cumulative impact of \$150 million over three years (FY08-\$56.4 million, FY09-\$49.8 million, FY10-\$44.2 million). See attached cost summary.
LTC, TEAME, ACOA	Upcoming	Contracts expire 6/30/09
MM&P, MEBA	In Negotiations	Contracts expired 6/30/08
Longevity Step Repeal and replacement with fair alternative	Completed	HB 417 repealed longevity steps and implemented pay increments for non-covered employees. PSEA negotiated similar provisions and Letters of Agreement have been signed with GGU, CEA and SU (pending) effective January 1, 2009. Cost to implement estimated at \$2.3 million in FY09 and \$1.5 million in FY10.
Flexibility for Deputy Commissioner Pay	Completed	HB 417 provides for appointment within range 28.
Deputy Director Pay Increase	Completed	Division Operations Manager, range 24 Deputy Director, range 25 (partially exempt only)
Training/Certification/ Education Survey Status	No Action	Will be put into New Work Plan
HR Integration Study	Upcoming	Development of the RFP will begin by October 1, 2008. RFP will be vetted through Working Group before release.
Streamline Intern Process	Completed	Levels were consolidated and flex staffing was implemented. Intern openings are now advertised through Workplace Alaska. This allows all interested parties to view/post internships in one central location.
Market-Based Pay	On Hold	A contractor will be hired to conduct a salary survey in 2009 to provide a more holistic approach.
Healthy Living Habits	Ongoing	Web Portal has been developed and usage is still in discovery stage. The database will be developed in 2009. Incentives for participation are under development.

Action Items – Within Two Years

Action Item	Status	Details
Geographic Differential Study	In Progress	\$400.0 for study appropriated. The contractor began work on September 16, 2008. The report is planned to be completed by January 31, 2009. The budget impact of implementation will be presented to the 2009 Legislature.
Tuition Reimbursement & Student Loan forgiveness	In Progress	Many departments currently reimburse employees for tuition for job-related classes. Departments will be advised of available options. Review of student loan forgiveness will be put into new work plan.
Knowledge Transfer Plans	In Progress	DOPLR has a presentation available to assist agencies in the development of these plans.

**Administrative Order No. 237
Executive Working Group
Status Report of Recommendations**

Flexible Work Schedules (Alternate Workweeks)	In Progress	The number of agreements statewide has increased from 1,508 in 2007 to 1,941 in 2008. Effort is continuing to inform departments of available options.
Revamp Classification Process and Review of Resources	In progress	Classification studies are being limited to those in class series which have experienced a significant change in duties. A parallel process to address salaries will be explored in conjunction with comprehensive salary survey.
Classification System Review	In progress	When appropriate, job classifications are being consolidated and single position job classifications are being eliminated.

Action Items – Within Three Years		
Action Item	Status	Details
Salary Survey	In Progress	Plan to award contract to begin study in January 2009 with expected completion by October 2009.
Workplace Alaska Portal Replacement	In Progress	Task Order has been released for the development of system requirements.
Legislation for 40 hour Workweek	No Action	Consideration will be given to implement for select groups of employees.

Ongoing Efforts		
Action Item	Status	Details
Less Restrictive Minimum Qualifications	In Progress	21 job class specifications involving over 350 state jobs have been reviewed and updated to ensure MQs reflect current job requirements.
Broader Use of Flexibly Classed Positions	Completed	The use of flexibly classed positions has been broadened for use within any series so long as the work exists at the requested levels.
Administrative Clerk Study	In Progress	This comprehensive study of 1,150 clerical positions is scheduled for completion by June 30, 2009. The study will examine the changes in clerical work since the classes were last studied (in 1996) and will provide a benchmark for aligning other clerical, paraprofessional and entry-level job classes.
Revamp Employee Evaluation Process	In Progress	Newly established pay increments require completion of an evaluation. The evaluation process is being reviewed and streamlined to ensure that employees are evaluated in a meaningful and timely manner.

Discussion Items	
Item	Details
Sabbaticals	Explore concept for state employees with extensive service - 15 yrs and up.
Telecommuting	Explore concept for working from home up to three days a week. Policy is under review and development.