



Restoring Civil Service Hosted by the Wisconsin Coalition to Save Civil Service

The Wisconsin Coalition to Save Civil Service will host a panel discussion entitled “Restoring Civil Service” on Monday, June 17, 2019 from 6:30 – 8:30PM at Madison Public Library. The Wisconsin Civil Service system was created in 1905 when Governor Robert M. La Follette signed one of the nation’s first civil service bills into law and will celebrate its 114th birthday on June 17th.

The event will include a panel discussion outlining the history and purpose of civil service, what has been lost over the last several decades, and what can be done to restore and improve civil service.

Panelists will include:

- Jim Thiel, former chief attorney for the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and current Association of Career Employee (ACE) Board Member

- Jack Lawton, former OSER Merit and Recruitment Administrator, and current ACE Board Member
- Ian Smith, 2nd Executive Vice President for American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) Local 1732, which represents employees at the VA Hospital in Madison
- Susan McMurray, former lobbyist and policy analyst for AFSCME, 2003-2017
- Matt Rothschild, Director, Wisconsin Democracy Campaign

Civil Service is a system, outlined in Wisconsin Statute, describing procedures for state employment such as hiring, promoting, disciplining and terminating employees based on an objective assessment of their qualifications. Civil Service is recognized as promoting clean government and preventing partisan influence, cronyism, corruption, patronage and nepotism in public agencies. Under the civil service system, government should serve the citizens of the state – not just corporate interests. The original slogan of the civil service was: “The Best Shall Serve the State.”

Since the late 1960s there has been an expansion of executive influence on hiring. Wisconsin's Act 150 – put into effect on July 1, 2016 – made recent historic changes and reductions in Wisconsin's Civil Service system, including eliminating the requirement for civil service exams in state hiring and changing the concepts of firing for cause. Since 2016 applicants for state jobs have decreased, there has been a spike in employees leaving state service and employee termination has increased substantially.

The Coalition to Save Civil Service includes the South Central Federation of Labor, AFSCME Council 32, American Federation of Teachers-Wisconsin (AFT-W), the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign, the Association of Career Employees (ACE), Blue Jean Nation, AFT-W State Employee Council, Wisconsin Professional Employee Association, POWRS, NAACP-Dane County, Progressive Dane, AFSCME Locals 171 and 68, AFSCME Retirees Subchapter 52, Wisconsin Science Professionals.

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