



OLR RESEARCH REPORT

January 18, 2013

2013-R-0066

QUESTIONS FOR LABOR COMMISSIONER NOMINEE

By: Lee R. Hansen, Legislative Analyst II

STRUCTURE AND DUTIES

- The commissioner must collect and publish data on employment, unemployment, and employee earnings; provide the governor with analysis of current and anticipated employment needs; and coordinate all employment and training programs. He or she must administer numerous labor laws including minimum wage, youth employment, family and medical leave, unemployment insurance compensation, and prevailing wage laws.
- Appointed by the governor.
- Confirmed by either chamber, as determined by the governor.

QUESTIONS

1. The governor and legislature have often stated that they hope to make Connecticut more “business friendly.” What steps can the department take to achieve this goal? What can the department do to encourage job creation?
2. What role does the state's unemployment system play in the state's economy? Are there any statutory, regulatory, or administrative changes to the state's unemployment system that could help encourage economic growth? What enforcement issues does the department face regarding the unemployment system?
3. What do you believe are the strengths and weaknesses of the state’s prevailing wage laws?
4. Connecticut’s minimum wage, \$8.25 an hour, is currently one of the highest in the nation. What effect do you think this has on the state’s economy?
5. How effective is the department at enforcing (a) wage and hour and (b) workplace safety laws?
6. What do you consider the major strengths and weaknesses of the state’s current workforce development system? Do you believe that the system is producing the workers with the skills the state's employers will need? How could the department work to improve the system?
7. What can the department do to help encourage more of the state’s younger workers to stay in the state?
8. How well informed is the general public, both employers and employees, about what the department does, and can do, for them? Can the department do more to increase the public's awareness?
9. Do you believe the department has adequate resources at its disposal to fulfill its many missions and goals?
10. In what ways has your own employment history prepared you to lead the department? To what extent do you think that your leadership of the department will be different than your predecessor's?

LH:tjo