



Appropriations Committee Public Hearing Testimony - March 4, 2021

Good morning, Chairman Porter, Chairman Walker and Members of the Labor Committee. I am Brian Anderson. I am a legislative coordinator for Council 4 AFSCME. Our union represents 30,000 public and private employees.

**We oppose S.B. No. 904 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE LABOR DEPARTMENT'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

The Department of Labor does not need more management. One deputy commissioner with no Executive Director should be more than enough. Creating a new managerial position within the Department of Labor while our members struggle to catch up on a backlog and process claims is not something that should be considered. The limited amount of resources should be spent on directly servicing the public by hiring people to process claims, hold hearings, and answer the numerous calls and emails we receive each day. This position has not been held within the department of labor since the Rowland administration. The long layover between now and then proves unequivocally that the position is not necessary for the functioning of the department of labor.

In addition, the Department of Labor is a small agency that has a commissioner and currently two deputy commissioners. This making the position of executive director utterly redundant. Furthermore, the implication that the CARES Act somehow creates a need for this position seems to be lacking. In all likelihood, the CARES Act will no longer be in effect by the end of this year and the current administration with that institutional knowledge regarding it will remain in effect past the conclusion of the CARES Act.

We also urge that any savings anticipated by not hiring an executive director be used to hire frontline staff. Staff are desperately needed for conducting hearings, answering the public's calls and emails and assisting them in returning to work. The contact center has over 100 temporary staff that should be made permanent.

Council 4 urges you to restore taxes on the richest of our citizens and go back to a tax system similar to that which made our country prosper through the fifties, sixties and seventies.

