

To the House Committee on Labor,

I am writing to you in support of House Bill No. 7217 to amend the desk audit process to allow state employees to reclassify if supervision of other employees is the only requirement lacking from their desk audit application.

I support this bill first because the state should be an example to its employers that if you want an excellent and durable workforce, employees must be allowed to progress in their careers. Second, because it will allow the state to retain younger and less tenured employees so that in depth institutional knowledge can be reinvested over time.

I am a laboratory scientist for the state and I work with small teams of talented scientists. The work each team does is highly specialized and even more so in a public service setting. Much of our work has to be learned through experience and time spent understanding the landscape of public health and learning how the state operates and administers its programs. There is no degree or credential that can substitute for that experience, as I'm sure the members of this committee can appreciate.

Our teams are small and our work is too specialized to switch teams easily, so opportunities for promotion are rare and transferring to a higher paid position on another team is often impossible. Desk audits are the only pathway to staying with the state long term and also weather the affordability crisis.

Passing this bill would help to make the desk audit process reflect the reality that people can grow their skills and take on new responsibilities without always supervising others. If the only people allowed to progress in their career path are supervisors we will never feel the benefits of investing in the longer term acumen and expertise of seasoned experts doing the hands-on work.

Thank you for taking this note into consideration,

Sincerely,

Courtney Sowa