

Testimony of Christopher McCormack
General Assembly's Labor Committee
Public hearing on the budget cuts, layoffs, and office closures/consolidations
September 28, 2015

"Good morning, Senator Ed Gomes, Representative Peter Tercyak, Members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. My name is Chris McCormack. I want to thank you for holding this public hearing today."

Skills Gap: The Connecticut Department of Labor can be divided into two generations. The first is the experienced generation which consists of employees who have worked with the agency for 15, 20, 30 and 40 years. The other is the newly hired employees with 5 to 10 years experience.

During the recent economic downturn the Connecticut Department of Labor took advantage of an exceptionally talented and qualified candidate pool. In 2010 over 50 candidates, including myself, were fortunate enough to be hired. This massive class of new hires consisted of recent college graduates who were enthusiastic about starting their careers.

Why is this class and, those hired since, so important to the agency?

Because, in the next 10 years these newly hired employees will be the primary workforce of the agency. We will be the supervisors, managers, decision makers, policy writers and frontline staff. If the agency intends to stay intact, functional and successful at meeting current and future technological demands, this generation needs to be retained.

New federal guidelines require more sophisticated systems for reporting, compliance, fraud prevention, benefit administration and employment services. Layoffs will drastically limit the agency's ability to keep pace.

The older generation has the wisdom the younger generation needs and the younger generation has the technical skills the agency needs. Today's decisions will determine how we serve Connecticut's residents tomorrow. So I leave you with this question; do we want to maintain the great integrity of our agency and continue to serve our residents to the level they deserve or are we going to close offices and layoff some of our most talented staff?