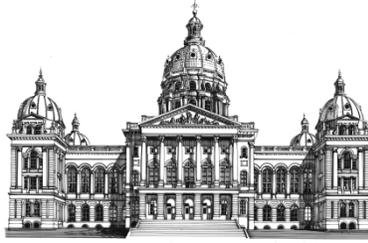


JANET PETERSEN
SENATE DEMOCRATIC LEADER
Eighteenth District
Statehouse: (515) 281-3901
janet.petersen@legis.iowa.gov



COMMITTEES

Rules & Administration, *Ranking Member*
Commerce
Judiciary

The Senate

State of Iowa
Eighty-eighth General Assembly
STATEHOUSE
Des Moines, IA 50319

May 29, 2019

Honorable Kim Reynolds
Governor
State Capitol
Des Moines 50319

Dear Governor:

As the May 31 application deadline approaches and you begin the selection process for a new Director for the Department of Administrative Services (DAS), we urge you to appoint a qualified candidate with a clean employment history. Iowa needs a leader who can restore taxpayers' faith in the Department.

DAS is responsible for managing and coordinating human, financial and physical resources in dozens of agencies and departments in state government. This Department should be setting a high bar in these areas to ensure our state employees and Iowans are safe and treated with dignity and tax dollars are not abused. For the past several years, taxpayers have paid a steep price for decisions and actions that have led to multi-million dollar lawsuits.

Taxpayers expect the new DAS Director to write a new chapter for the Department that establishes higher expectations than what we've seen over the past several years.

Specifically, recent Directors have:

- Denied Iowans access to basic, public information about the number of harassment complaints in state government and how much taxpayer dollars have been spent to compensate harassment victims.
- Taken a restrictive, punitive approach to negotiating contracts with state employees.
- Put the health and safety of state employees and Iowans at risk through dangerous staff reductions, overtime policies, and other employment practices that were previously protected under collective bargaining.
- Mishandled a sweeping scandal at the Iowa Finance Authority (IFA) that included rampant harassment of employees, a failure by IFA staff and DAS staff to address complaints, and pay raises and promotions that were based on cronyism rather than merit.
- Approved secret settlements – described by some as “hush money” – to outgoing state employees.

- Endangered the rights of workers by maintaining a “do-not-hire” list without due process for workers to challenge their inclusion on the list.
- Failed to adequately update and enforce harassment policies in the executive branch.
- Conducted hirings, firings and promotions across state government that appear to be based on political connections rather than qualifications.

Unfortunately, the job posting on the DAS website -- <https://tinyurl.com/y6b8faym> -- does not include any specific requirement or expectations of the new DAS Director to address the serious problems Iowans faced with recent directors. Hiring a new DAS Director without experience or a proven track record would not only send a bad message, it will likely lead to more mismanagement, cronyism, and multi-million dollar settlements.

The #MeToo movement, combined with harassment settlements that have cost Iowa taxpayers several million dollars, have raised the bar for department directors and other supervisors in state government.

It isn't enough anymore to say that there is a “zero tolerance” policy in state government. We need a new Director of the Department of Administrative Services who is prepared to lead with better policies, better training and better enforcement.

State employees and Iowa taxpayers deserve better.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janet Petersen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "J".

Janet Petersen
State Senator