

THE GREEN WIRE

SENATOR TIMOTHY P. GREEN - DISTRICT 13

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JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. -- In a straight party-line vote today, the Joint Committee on Legislative Research approved the hiring of Pat Secrest, the former Missouri Division of Workers' Compensation director who resigned recently under questionable and as of yet unknown circumstances.

Given Secrest's lengthy and documented history of attacking the workers' compensation system and undermining hardworking Missourians, her hiring appears designed to provide slanted information for a Republican-controlled interim committee that is preparing a report on the state's Second Injury Fund.

The function of the Legislative Research staff is to provide lawmakers with objective and nonpartisan information and advice on issues under consideration by the General Assembly. State Sen. Tim Green, D-St. Louis, questioned the ability of Secrest, a former Republican state lawmaker, to provide unbiased and confidential information to lawmakers.

"Pat Secrest is a partisan voice for the Associated Industries of Missouri and she cannot provide an impartial and objective report on the Second Injury Fund," Green said. "AIM should pay her salary as she authors the committee report, which will be skewed and favorable to the views of special interests."

Legislative staff and advisors should be knowledgeable in their chosen field of expertise, but they shouldn't be partial to any particular idea or viewpoint, Green said

"This report is tainted before the ink dries due to the inability of Pat Secrest to be objective and impartial as a legislative staff member," Green said. "This is comparable to having Exxon, PetroChina or BP paying for an academic study of the future of renewable energy standards. Such a study couldn't be considered objective or impartial, thus rendering its results questionable."

House Minority Leader Paul LeVota, D-Independence, also questioned the propriety of Secrest's hiring at Legislative Research given her cozy relationship with pro-business groups.

"It is improper for a staffer with close ties to a special interest group seeking changes in state law to be hired at taxpayer expense to author the report that will guide the legislature's work on this issue," LeVota said. "This job should be filled by a public policy professional, not a politician."

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