

2017.11.14

2.11 Deputy J.M. Maçon of the Chairman, States Employment Board regarding an independent review of the Serious Concerns Policy: [1(605)]

Has there been an independent review of the Serious Concerns Policy, which has included input from staff representatives, the Comptroller and Auditor General and other interested parties, within the last 3 years; if so, what were the results and, if not, why has there been no such review?

Senator A.K.F. Green (Chairman, States Employment Board):

This is a really interesting question. The Serious Concerns Policy, along with all States Human Resources policies, are under regular review. This policy was last reviewed in September 2015 and amended as needed. The reviews included all appropriate stakeholders, including workforce representatives. The policy though is currently under review and this is currently being overseen by the Non-Executive Director of S.E.B. (States Employment Board) and we have appointed an external specialist consultancy to help us with that review.

2.11.1 Deputy J.M. Maçon:

I understood previously that the Comptroller and Auditor General expressed concerns that they should not be the independent person employees go to, given that we have already had a review, and this appears to be the same situation. Can the representative of the States Employment Board explain how this is going to change and who will be the new independent body?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

When the policy was last amended, it extended the number of designated people that an individual can present concerns to. It was extended to 5. The Deputy is right, historically it was only the C. and A.G. (Comptroller and Auditor General), so the Chief Executive of the States, the Treasurer of the States, the Chief Internal Auditor, Director of Human Resources and the Chairman of the Audit Committee are part of that group that they could contact now. But that is under review because I know how difficult that would be for ordinary working folk to contact any of those. That is one of the things that we have asked our consultants to look at: how it would be easy for people to raise a concern or make a complaint.

2.11.2 Deputy J.M. Maçon:

I appreciate effectively whistle-blowing policies in a small community where there are not necessarily opportunities when one raises a complaint and a black mark is placed against one's name. Can I ask, though, what assessment is done under this review in ascertaining States Employees' current confidence in the Serious Concerns Policy and how that can be addressed?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

Well that is part of the work that the N.E.D. (Non-Executive Director) and the consultants that we have employed to do this work will do. I want it to be easy and I want it to be safe for staff to raise concerns or make complaints. That is why we had already ordered the review and, clearly, I am on the same wavelength as the Deputy in many respects on this one. We have got to make it safe and easy for staff to raise concerns and that is the whole aim of this work.