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SCR-32 State employee merit awards. (2017-2018)

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Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 32

CHAPTER 121

Relative to state employee merit awards.

[Filed with Secretary of State August 25, 2017.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 32, Pan. State employee merit awards.

This measure would declare that merit award payments in specified amounts, authorized by the Department of Human Resources, are made to specified current or retired state employees whose proposals have resulted in annual savings and net revenue gains to the state.

Fiscal Committee: yes

WHEREAS, Section 19823 of the Government Code authorizes the Department of Human Resources to make awards to current or retired state employees who propose procedures or ideas that are subsequently adopted and placed in effect and result in eliminating or reducing state expenditures or improving state operations; and

WHEREAS, Any award granted under Section 19823 of the Government Code in excess of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) must be approved by concurrent resolution of the Legislature; and

WHEREAS, The three following recipients should be awarded for their effective, cost-saving ideas; and

WHEREAS, The Department of State Hospitals (DSH) purchased metal beds for patients through the Prison Industry Authority. Ms. Mary Lou Carr found the metal beds expensive and labor intensive for staff as they required extra cleaning and upkeep and created an unsanitary sleep surface for incontinent patients. The mattresses, purchased separately, required frequent replacement as they were susceptible to tearing, damage, and contamination, which created an unsanitary sleep surface with extremely unpleasant odors; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Carr researched the issue, but could not find a bed to mitigate the problem. After requesting a sample of polyethylene and realizing it would be the perfect material for incontinent patients, she designed a bed. After three years of persistence on her part, Norix, a furniture company, began manufacturing the Attenda Sleigh Bed modeled after Ms. Carr's design; and

WHEREAS, The bed is a molded one-piece unit and does not contain any removable hardware, thus eliminating safety issues arising from material that can be ingested or made into weapons. The material is chemically resistant to fluids and has holes to allow fluids to drain away from the mattress and user. The unique design also does not allow hiding places for contraband. The beds come in two sizes: regular height and a low bed for patients with seizures or other conditions that increase the risk of falling. The beds are virtually indestructible, outlasting the life expectancy of the steel beds many times over. The manufacturer praised

Ms. Carr for her innovative idea and noted there is a growing interest from behavioral health care facilities throughout the country for these beds. It was also noted that the beds are stylish, do not look institutional and the idea will help improve conditions and the quality of life for patients in behavioral hospitals throughout the country; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Carr, now the Director of General Services at Napa State Hospital, was a Business Services Officer I, Specialist, at the time she submitted this suggestion. Ms. Carr did not have the authority, nor was it in her job description, to design a bed for incontinent patients. The total first year savings for DSH from this suggestion was \$80,913.00 and Ms. Carr's approved award is \$16,182.60. Ms. Carr has already received the initial \$5,000, and a resolution is needed to pay the \$11,182.60 balance; and

WHEREAS, The Bureau of Real Estate (BRE) in the Department of Consumer Affairs mails courtesy renewal packages to real estate brokers, officers, and salespeople on a yearly basis, and the broker and officer renewals consisted of five pages, including forms, and the salesperson package consisted of four pages, including forms; and

WHEREAS, Kathleen Czech suggested reformatting the letter to instead include links to the BRE's Internet Web site instead of sending the additional forms with the courtesy letter. Ms. Czech is a Program Technician II with the BRE, and her duties include reviewing renewal applications for completeness, answering the public inquiry phone line, and sorting mail. Ms. Czech did not have independent authority, nor is it in her job description, to reformat statewide correspondence and mailings; and

WHEREAS, The BRE implemented this suggestion and realized a first year savings of \$70,211.58; Ms. Czech has received \$5,000 of her \$14,042.32 award and this resolution is needed to approve the \$9,042.32 balance; and

WHEREAS, Alan Kondo works for the Employment Development Department's Work Opportunity Tax Credit Processing Center (WOTC). This is a high-volume office, processing approximately 15,000 requests for certificates each month. If a "Request for Additional Information" was not received within 90 days, the records had to be manually updated and then purged. Due to the high number of requests, one full-time Employment Program Representative's entire eight-hour shift was spent purging records; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kondo suggested automating this function and using a reason code of "Insufficient Information." After the Information Technology unit made several adjustments to the applicable program, the suggestion was incorporated into the WOTC computer production system. This function is now being done automatically in just a few minutes each day, freeing up one Employment Program Representative position and allowing staff to perform more significant work within the unit; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kondo, now retired, was an Employment Program Representative at the time he submitted this suggestion. Mr. Kondo did not have the authority, nor was it in his job description, to provide solutions for the WOTC system. The personnel cost savings realized from this innovative idea totaled \$60,870.90 the first year, and Mr. Kondo's approved award is \$12,174.18. Mr. Kondo has already received the initial \$5,000, and a resolution is now needed to award him the \$7,174.18 balance; and

WHEREAS, The savings generated by implementation of these suggestions will continue to be realized on an annual basis; and

WHEREAS, As a result of actual savings generated from the implementation of these suggestions, it is unnecessary to appropriate additional funds for payment of awards to these employees; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That the Legislature of the State of California hereby declares that merit award payments, authorized by the five-member Merit Award Board and the Department of Human Resources, are hereby made in amounts up to and including 10 percent of the first year savings generated by each suggestion, as follows:

(a) To Ms. Carr for the amount of \$11,182.60.

(b) To Ms. Czech for the amount of \$9,042.32.

(c) To Mr. Kondo for the amount of \$7,174.18; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the Controller and to the Department of Human Resources.