Commissioner Saltzman passes Civil Service Reform Amendment 11/08/00 -

On Tuesday, November 7, the citizens of Portland voted to exempt from civil service, all Bureau Directors hired after December 31, 2000. This is the first charter change the City has passed since 1994.

Commissioner Saltzman stated, "As elected officials, the public has entrusted us to oversee Bureaus with budgets which are in the tens and hundreds of millions. Given our form of government, each Commissioner is held accountable for their Bureau's performance. To be fully accountable, we must be given a reasonable and fair ability to put in place a quality leadership team to assure the proper functioning of entire departments and bureaus. In the event that a bureau director is unable to effectively manage their bureau, the Commissioner-in-Charge will now have direct authority over that director."

"In a time when we are working hard to make every cent count, we will not be trapped or second-guessed in our need to ensure our Bureau Directors are the most competent and professional people for the job. If they are unable to satisfactorily perform their duties, we will now have the authority to let them go".

"This charter reform makes our role as City Commissioners square with the public's perception and expectation, of our role as Commissioners-in-Charge". Saltzman also stated that "there are definitely safeguards for Bureau Directors. We don't want a rogue commissioner trying to release someone without provocation. To prevent this, the Mayor can, at any time, take back any or all of the Bureaus and reassign them as she or he sees fit".

The charter amendment passed by a healthy margin.