

### Ensuring Civil Rights for Civil Servants

The purpose of this committee is to develop a policy and procedural (P&P) change that both satisfies an employee's desire to speak publicly while maintaining the professionalism and good public standing of this agency. To facilitate these efforts, the following three steps will be used as a guide in order to "Invent Solutions That Satisfy Everyone's Interests Without Becoming Attached to Any Particular Solution" (Cloke, 2011, p. 190)

- 1) Jointly generate options through brainstorming.

Committee members will share ideas about what could be reasonably allowed. Members are encouraged to expand on the suggestions of their peers. Considering both pros and cons will help to fine-tune the proposed change, allow for compromise, and the satisfaction of all parties. Utilizing group thought will generate a broad spectrum of ideas.

- 2) Consult with experts, critics, coaches, and anyone affected by the problem or the solution to solicit feedback on alternative solutions.

Media relations experts from various fields of civil service with more liberal policies will be consulted for guidance. Case studies and civil disputes regarding violations of First Amendment rights will be considered. Both civil law experts, the District Attorney's Office, and the human resources department will be asked to review the draft proposal. Remaining suggestions can be posed to the employees by way of a survey questionnaire in order to poll the opinions of the staff who would be affected by this policy change.

- 3) Test your hypothesis or conclusions through a pilot project.

Upon permission of the Chief, a pilot program will be initiated for a specified duration. Amnesty for comments and expressions made within the limitations of the law and the new guidelines would allow for employees to feel comfortable enough to embrace this change. An evaluation of the successes and failures of will prompt final revisions.

After following the above guidelines, the committee proposes the following policy regarding personal public social media:

Employees are encouraged to privatize their social media accounts to limit the exposure of their "posts" to unintended recipients. Privatizing of accounts will reduce the potential for the employee to receive complaint, civil or criminal liability, or expose themselves to outsider retaliation. Employees may discuss opinions regarding policies, procedures, and politics so long as the comments do not violate any laws or agency policies as it regards to Equal Opportunity Rights and freedom from discrimination. Employees may not negatively refer to the agency or other employees by mention of name, title, or position. The

employee is responsible for ensuring their posts are in compliance with all articles of the P&P. The employee accepts all liability for all posts. Violation of this policy will be reviewed on a case by case basis and are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

References:

Cloke, K., & Goldsmith, J. (2011). *Resolving conflicts at work: ten strategies for everyone on the job*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.