

Hammond blasted for minority hire

Under increasing pressure from critics of Alaska's performance in equal opportunity employment, Gov. Jay Hammond recently announced measures to correct the problem.

The Hammond Administration announced the creation of a work force analysis system, designed to show state agencies what minorities are available for employment.

"Development of this system is very significant because we can't establish a workable affirmative action program without knowing how many minorities might be available in the work force for various jobs," Hammond commented.

A legislative study headed up by Sen. Chancy Croft, reveals tersely how bleak the minority hire picture in Alaska is:

"1. State employment is mostly white male.

"2. The higher up the pay scale, the more employment becomes almost exclusively white, male.

"3. There is not now and has never been an effective State EEO Program.

"4. An effective program requires at a minimum that

the EEO Office be placed in the Governor's Office, that funding be substantially increased, and that an Affirmative Action Program be developed and implemented.

"5. As one of Alaska's largest employers, State government can do the most to change employment patterns, increase employment opportunities, and eliminate racial and sexist discrimination. At the present time, State government is probably doing the least."

A Southeastern group, known as the Juneau Affirmative Action Coalition, conceded the Hammond Administration has an equal opportunity plan, but that it is not being implemented:

"We have formed the Juneau Affirmative Action Coalition because equal employment opportunity and the state's Affirmative Action Plan have not gone beyond a promise. The state has a basically sound and creative affirmative action plan, but it is not being implemented. The result for minorities and women is still the same: being funnelled into the lowest paying jobs and into positions with

little or no career advancement opportunities. Women and minorities comprise 81.5% of state employees in the bottom pay ranges 5 through 10, while they comprise only 9.5% of the employees in the top pay ranges, 22 through 28.

"Most state employees do not even know about the state's affirmative action plan. No one has ever seen the affirmative action handbook promised in the plan. No one has ever heard about the orientation workshops, the career counseling, the training, or the career ladders promised. Virtually no one knows where the EEO office is, as it is impossible to find without a guide. We went to the state library three times looking for a copy of the plan; they had never heard of an affirmative action plan, and they never found a copy for us.

"But what angers us most was the discovery that your proposed budget cut 20.5% from the EEO Office's budget request. How can you claim to make EEO and affirmative action your "primary goal" and to be "firmly committed" and taking "personal leadership" with this kind of cut in a budget request that is already insufficient to even begin to accomplish equal employment opportunity for all?"

The Coalition has asked the Governor to make good promises it says he made in the area of equal job opportunity by:

"1. publicly stating your determination to see that the state's affirmative action plan is implemented without further delay, particularly the sections on career counseling, training, and developing career ladders for women and minorities;

"2. requesting additional money in the EEO Office budget for the development and implementation of affirmative action workshops for all employees, and outreach programs for minorities and women;

"3. and issuing a directive to all state departments that every state employee shall receive at least four hours of affirmative action orientation annually, on state time."

In announcing the creation of the work force analysis system, Hammond concluded:

"We shall need the technical expertise of the EEO staff as well as the leadership of the Cabinet and myself to succeed. I have repeatedly asked for the accurate up-to-date data on employees and applicants and find that we are still about two months from having in place the system to accomplish these basic tasks. The staff should be greatly assisted by the significant data improvement, and I anticipate that advantage eagerly. Until Commissioner Allen and I can look at trustworthy

data, I am left with no alternative but to reiterate my policy statements and personal goals to eliminate any discrimination in State government hiring practices and procedures."

Croft lambasted the minority hire records of state agencies in his report:

"Equal Employment Opportunity results vary significantly from department to department—5% to 46% women, 0% to 8% minorities. In hiring women, only the Department of Health and Social Services is doing an adequate job (46%). The records of Military Affairs, the Department of Public Safety, Fish and Game, and the Department of Transportation are miserable. These four departments have 1,412 employees in the upper ranges which constitute 47% of employees in that category. Community and Regional Affairs, the Governor's Office, and Education are better than average but not good enough. The remainder are woefully inadequate. As to minority hire, no department is doing an adequate job; only Community and Regional Affairs (8%), apparently even makes an effort. The Departments of Military Affairs, Revenue, Natural Resources, and Transportation are atrocious.

"The State's bad employment record results from its

ineffective EEO Program. The present EEO Officer has demonstrated considerable ability and determination. But program efforts have been hampered by numerous factors. Four are particularly important. First, the State has had four EEO Officers in the last four years. Second, the office is in the Department of Administration and not the Office of the Governor. Third, there is no Affirmative Action Program in any State department and no Equal Employment Officer designated in any department. (The Department of Transportation has an outstanding EEO Officer. Unfortunately, her function is contract compliance alone and not the department's employment practices and patterns.) Fourth, and probably most important, there has been a lack of commitment which is particularly obvious regarding funding. For example, this year the Governor is requesting less money for EEO (FY '79) than requested or appropriated last year. It is \$93,000 less than the agency requested and \$70,000 less than is necessary to maintain existing operations."