



# STATE ENGINEERING ASSOCIATION

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Dear Editor,

Finally Wisconsin is starting to understand. We have read story after story in the newspapers about contractors being paid exorbitant rates to do work normally done by state employees while the contractors sit in state offices and use state equipment. We have seen cost analysis reports that prove consultants are much more expensive than having existing state employees do the same type of work. We have also seen state officials trying to cover up these facts.

We were heartened when Senators Cowles and Ellis introduced a bill to require cost analysis before state work is contracted out. This is an obvious, common-sense approach that most people assumed was already occurring. Legislators are finally realizing that the state can no longer afford to assume the private sector is always cheaper.

Now we see legislators ranting and raving against state agencies. "You should have come to us to request more employees, rather than hiring these high-cost consultants." They say that now, but when those same agencies came to them, hat in hand, to ask for more, they were ridiculed, told to "do more with less," and sent on their way empty-handed.

Remember the Governor's pledge to get rid of 10,000 state employees? We've been living in the culture of "cut state employee, regardless of the cost to the state," for three years. In tight budget times, that culture has come back to haunt us.

Have we learned a lesson? The Governor and the Legislature continue to cut state employees. As more employees lose their jobs, more consultants are used to do the business of the state.

Unfortunately, it will be very difficult to reverse the damage that has been done to state agencies. They have lost dedicated people with the knowledge and experience to serve the people of Wisconsin and save taxpayer dollars. They have lost core competencies that will be very expensive to restore.

But the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reports, those terrific, overpaid consultants, such as Pratul Gupta who takes \$215 out of taxpayers' pockets for every hour he works, are now indispensable. "Now he's been here for two years (and knows the department's needs), so his value has grown for us," said a Department of Workforce Development official.

Let's see...consultants can make \$215 per hour with 3-5 percent yearly raises built into their state contract, and their "value continues to grow with each passing year." How about those dedicated state employees who faithfully serve the citizens of this state? Do we have no value? Must we endure pay cuts, benefit cuts and layoffs every year?

Sincerely,

Mark Klipstein, President  
State Engineering Association