

Thursday, June 07, 2007

Mr. William A. Hobbs
Deputy Secretary of State
Department of State
1700 Broadway, Suite 250
Denver, CO 80290
By Hand Delivery

Dear Mr. Hobbs,

This statement is my supplement to the corrective action letter issued to me on April 30, 2007. I understand it will be attached to and included as part of that letter.

Treasurer Mike Coffman hired me away from Congressman Tom Tancredo in late 2002 to work in the Colorado Treasurers office, specifically in the Unclaimed Property Division. I was chosen because I am known for my database skills, including working with large lists and because I hold a Masters Degree in Computer Information systems from the University of Denver, which qualified me for the opening created when a state employee resigned from the position.

On January 9, 2007, Secretary Mike Coffman took office as Secretary of State where he had to address a lawsuit requiring the recertification of computerized voting equipment, as well as an office in violation of the Help America Vote Act because of a failed attempt at a state wide voter database. Even with these failures, not one person in the Elections Division was known to have any significant, professional computer systems background or was holding a Masters Degree in Computer Information Systems. Yet, the Information Technology Division makes up 33 of the 120 employees, an extraordinarily high ratio for any agency of government or otherwise. Thus, Secretary of State Coffman called on me to help resolve the situation.

It is not surprising Secretary Coffman would seek to bring on board an experienced State Employee, with a track record of success, particularly one who has been involved as a political issue activist, opposing growing and intrusive government for over a decade from without and within, regardless of party affiliation. He must have believed I could clean up the problems of yet another division of a state agency.

History of Success

My first action in the State Unclaimed Property Office (in late 2002) was to reconfigure the network so the state employees in the Unclaimed Property Office would have internal email for the first time in their 25 year history.

They did have one email address prior to my arrival where "web claims" were emailed to a USwest account that was checked regularly by disconnecting an older computer from the internal network, connecting it to a modem, reconfiguring the computer to see the modem, retrieving the mail, disconnecting and reconfiguring the same computer, connecting it to the internal network, printing the emails, then hand entering the requests when time permitted. This was a convoluted and needlessly long process, prone to mistakes. The email system was fully reconfigured by me before the end of my first few weeks in the office and at no cost to the taxpayers.

My second major accomplishment was to personally rewrite the entire Department of Treasury web site and reconfigure the existing "web claim request" emails into a table that could then be imported directly to the Unclaimed Property software used to process claim requests. This caused one temporary worker's job to go away and reduced the over all claim request processing time from weeks to hours while increasing accuracy. All of this was accomplished with no downtime and at a cost savings to the taxpayers of at least \$20,000/year.

Over the course of almost four years, I automated or streamlined nearly every function in the Unclaimed Property Office. The number of personnel remained the same while productivity increased two fold or more. Processes taking up to six months with multiple personnel were reduced to one month and one person. Other processes taking six to eight weeks were reduced to days and in some cases, minutes. Accuracy and attention to detail were all increased.

Major Project Management Achievements

In Colorado, between 2004 and 2006, there were two successful computer system conversions, not in the Department of Revenue, not in Department of Human Services, nor in the Secretary of State office, but in the Colorado Treasurers office.

The first system conversion took 1.6 million properties worth an estimated \$200,000,000 and 35,000 claims worth an estimated \$10,000,000 per year system from an old FoxPro database program to a new Microsoft SQL server based program with no noticeable down time. I was responsible for managing the entire process; the success went unnoticed by any news media, as should most successful major projects.

The second system conversion was a project accomplished under the Colorado Internet Portal Authority. I designed, managed and implemented the complete web automation of the rapidly growing "web claims" process. This reduced a weeklong claim request process where a form was requested, processed and finally mailed from the Unclaimed Property Office (typically using temporary staff) roughly 20 to 40,000 times a year; to a process where an on-line claim form is instantly generated at the speed of internet and requires no staff time or postage at all. This was done at no cost and produced a savings to the taxpayers of Colorado of at least \$40,000/year.

A press conference was held, the system was introduced as a great money-saving service to the people of Colorado, and there was a very brief article slightly longer than this paragraph.

Early Secretary of State Accomplishments

From my first days in the Secretary of State office, I was tasked with voting equipment recertification rules based on measurable outcomes (Rule 45) and with realigning the voter database that had grown to a full scale \$10,000,000 one-size-fits-all election management system with problems I had been pointing out since December when I began researching them. Some concerns are still pending and both projects are still in progress. I was also asked to review the web site and both the Campaign Finance and Lobbyist reporting systems to see what positive changes could be made.

One of the first accomplishments in the Secretary of States office was to affect a change to the on-line Lobbyist Reporting system at the request of Representative Morgan Carroll (D-Aurora). To accomplish this change, I was forced to essentially pull rank on the now retired "Chief Information Officer" (Brian Balay), making it clear this simple report was a Secretary of State priority. I was initially informed, by the IT Division; it would take up to four months, although it was done in about three weeks after an offer to do it myself was rejected.

The next accomplishment was to foster the implementation of a more strict data security policy due to an email sent to me, as well as others outside of the SOS office, in the form of a text file with Social Security Numbers and other personally identifiable data. Out of my personal experience and concern, the information was immediately deleted from my email once the nature of the file was recognized. On February 22, 2007, I notified the sender that such information should never be sent in such a manner. I also notified the Deputy Chief Information Officer, Trevor Timmons, and suggested an immediate policy statement should be sent out offering draft language within a few days of the incident. An informal notice was generated and distributed to some of the involved parties.

On March 30, 2007 after two related incidences (one in the Elections Division with Drivers License numbers being posted on the web-site and another in the Business Division where Social Security Numbers were being posted) were discovered; I offered a draft policy statement in a format very similar to my original draft. It was sent to Deputy Secretary of State, William Hobbs, Deputy CIO, Trevor Timmons, and Chief Administrative Officer, Jacque Ponder. An office policy statement was sent out on April 4, 2007 to address the issue. **For this true violation of both State and Federal law, not one person was disciplined or demoted.**

An Honest Mistake

I updated my resume on my home computer by locating files with "resume" in the title and making appropriate changes based on the context of the file. At some point in time, I posted it to my web site on a sub page and an **automated feature** in my web-publishing tool (Microsoft FrontPage) updated a date field on the main web page to say the information was current as of the date I hit the "publish" button. The entire publishing process takes less than a minute.

Not one campaign, including Secretary Coffman's own statewide run, uses the voter list from the Colorado Secretary of State office as it is notoriously out of date and unreliable for campaign purposes.

Treasurer Mike Coffman and his transition and communications manager, Brian Anderson, as well as his previous Deputy Treasurer Ben Stein had ample knowledge of my political affiliation and business, they have been on my mailing list for years. There was no conflict when I was with the Treasurers office and I had seldom thought about nor even advertised the web site or business in the months of my employ at the Secretary of State office.

Appropriate Remediation

I have served in the United States Army Reserve from 1982 to 1988. I worked in the private sector as a computer systems analyst and programmer for 15 years before working as a system administrator and policy analyst in Washington DC for Tom Tancredo from 1999 to 2002.

This honest mistake has now significantly impacted my state wages and disproportionately altered my career path in a negative manner. The offending web page was immediately removed, the business (that has demonstrably never show a profit) is gone, yet I am still the subject of investigation due to the "serious nature of the accusation."

My reputation has been tarnished through the accusation of theft, not due to posting a web page, unchanged since 2004. Once the results of the second, independent state audit show me to be innocent of theft, I believe it would be appropriate to generate an official statement or letter from the SOS office exonerating me of this externally generated, politically motivated accusation and attaching it to this corrective action letter.

Respectfully,



Daniel J. Kopelman

cc: Employee Personnel File
Appointing Authority
Office of Human Resources

I received a copy of this document today:

William A. Hobbs
Appointing Authority Signature

6/8/07
Date