

CHARTER REVIEW STATEMENT
KEN SILLIMAN, CHIEF OF STAFF TO MAYOR FRANK G. JACKSON
APRIL 3, 2008

When the voters of Cleveland first passed the civil service portions of the Charter, recent memories of Tammany Hall and similar municipal hiring practices were still fresh in the minds of voters. The existing Charter provisions establish objective selection and evaluation procedures for the vast majority of City workers, while preserving limited rights for executives to choose staff which can be hired and fired at will.

You have heard proposals for change in 2008. I am here to state the needs of those who are responsible for governing the City. I will start by reaffirming the need for objective selection and evaluation procedures for most City workers: i.e., a continued Civil Service function. Later on, you will hear from our Civil Service Secretary and our Personnel Director on some recommended adjustments in selection and promotion procedures in the classified class.

But the focus of my testimony is on the need of an elected mayor, as well as elected Council members, for unclassified personnel in their offices, and the need for the mayor's appointed directors to have an unclassified assistant director position. Unlike the rank and file of City employees, the mayor of Cleveland is *directly accountable* to the electorate. He or she makes numerous controversial decisions each day and depends on his or her

immediate staff to carry out directives quickly and effectively with little room for error. A person who cannot or will not follow orders—orders that often involve crisis situations—cannot be permitted to remain in office. The mayor’s inner office (an inner office which in our case does not exceed 30 employees) must remain “at will” employees. We accomplish this by including in the unclassified service: “Executive Assistants to the Mayor and Special Assistants to the Mayor...”

Similarly, the director positions (which have always been unclassified) need to have one assistant director position that is unclassified. This allows each director to implement the mayor’s agenda through the availability of at least one employee who is directly accountable to the director and who can be hired and fired at the director’s will.

What we ask here is common practice in Ohio cities: all five other major Ohio cities already allow unclassified assistants to the mayor; four out of five allow unclassified assistant directors.

Staying within Charter Section 126, we also seek unclassified designation for the positions of Chief of Fire, Chief of Utilities Police, and Chief of Airport Fire. These classifications are in effect in two of the major Ohio cities, and another two cities designate as classified with special removal processes.