

To the Honorable Board of Supervisors of the County of Humboldt:

We, the undersigned, are submitting the following statement by our own volition.

We are writing this statement regarding the board item 20-1533 which will be discussed by the Board of Supervisors on Monday November 23, 2020. We have read over the board item carefully and we are offended by the inference that the Office of the Auditor-Controller is damaging the County of Humboldt's fiscal operations, financial condition, and reputation. The Office of the Auditor-Controller and its employees are all hard working and diligent public servants who continue to persevere under extremely difficult circumstances. Despite elected Supervisors, appointed Administrators, and Departmental Managers not supporting and even seemingly undermining our efforts, we remain true to the Auditor-Controller's platform of accountability and transparency. We feel that the agenda item is lacking much needed context and attempts to lay blame for the County's current problems solely at the feet of the Auditor-Controller's office. This scapegoating of the Auditor-Controller and her office needs to stop. There have been several factors that have led to the problems laid out in the agenda item, including general County mismanagement, departmental delays in providing requested clarification, and inability to provide required substantiating documentation.

The Office of the Auditor-Controller has utilized every resource available to improve the efficiency of operations. This includes removing superfluous steps from the check printing process, moving to EFT payments, and developing data import methods with our existing technology to save time on data entry. Despite these time saving measures, the office still finds itself unable to meet the ever-growing demands of State and County government and needs more staff to complete its essential tasks in a timely manner.

As it stands, the incredible workload in the Auditor-Controller's office has led to employee burnout, which has resulted in an increased number of sick days, employees going out on extended leave or even quitting. This in turn results in even more work being heaped upon the employees that remain, causing further delays and stress. On top of that, the limited number of positions make it difficult for employees to advance and causes employees to leave as they seek advancement in other departments. All these factors have led to a high amount of turnover, thus contributing to the department's difficulty in keeping up with tasks. It is the Board's reluctance to fully staff the Auditor-Controller's department which has led to the high turnover, not the Auditor-Controller's leadership style. By giving the Auditor-Controller's office the resources it needs, the Board of Supervisors would prove that it cares about the health and wellbeing of its employees and that our local government is committed to accountability, transparency and full compliance with state and federal laws.

We believe it is time for the Board of Supervisors, the County Administrative Office and all department heads to defer to the Auditor-Controller's expertise, so we may continue making progress together as a team.

Sincerely,

Amanda Cherry, Accountant/Auditor II
Chance Hamilton, Senior Fiscal Assistant
Theresa Baker-Beale, Senior Fiscal Assistant
LaNae Henderson, Accountant/Auditor I/II
James Hussey, Senior Accountant/Auditor
Courtney Karnes, Senior Fiscal Assistant
Cindy Luke, Accountant/Auditor I/II