

COLORADO MAY SEE A CHANGE IN STATE EMPLOYMENT



Employment changes are coming soon enough for those who live in Colorado. Kim Bodin is a 54 year old, state prison nurse. The news is that she has not received a raise in several years. She is watching the news about different state officials who are talking about state employees. Apparently, state employees have a variety of ways in which they can be hired and fired. "There is a big move in this country to make people who work for government the fall guy for this economy," said Bodin. Bodin is a nurse at the Department of Corrections' Denver Reception and Diagnostic Center. Bodin currently makes around \$37,000 in annual salary and has not been issued a raise in the previous four years. Despite the lack of raises, her health insurance premiums and retirement contributions have increased. Governor John Hickenlooper is a Democrat, who has a lot of changes in store for some 30,000 Colorado employees. The state of Colorado wants state employment to be a little hard to get into. The idea is to make it more competitive but also more flexible in how it handles certain situations. Hickenlooper has addressed that Colorado's personnel policies are not up-to-par and he intends to change them. "The state constitution is riddled with personnel rules and administrative procedures that are obsolete and should be reformed," Hickenlooper said. Although, Hickenlooper is not specific in what he wants to change. Employers are at a loss for not knowing what he wants to change 100 percent. There are rumors surrounding the proposed change, but all anyone can do is wait. Republicans want to change what the State pays the employees. "Obviously one of the biggest drivers of our state budget is personnel, so anything we can do to review that is something we should do," said Republican Sen. Scott Renfro of Greeley. Changes may be simple or they may be complex, but the bottom line is that they need changed. In order to make any changes, a vote would need to be taken and approved. Colorado residents have declined the attempts made to change Progressive Era personnel regulations that require new hires be done so according to fitness and to merit. Scott Wasserman is the executive director of a union that represents a large number of employees that Hickenlooper discussed. Wasserman said that he is not ready to reject the proposals from Hickenlooper right away or altogether. "I don't think we're asking for the moon here. We're asking for reasonable steps at reform that include employees in the conversation," Wasserman said.