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Date: 4/4/2007 5:30:11 PM
Subject: Article citing DMV reengineering and process improvements

Marcia,
I ran across the following article this afternoon and thought of you. I don't know anything about this DOT issue, but I do know it's never as easy as it might sound. While executive control may have been a part of the solution, I know your leadership was one of the critical success factors in the evolution of the SC DMV. I found it odd (...unfortunately not surprising) that your name wasn't mentioned.

I hope you're doing well!
Take care,

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For a reform example take a look at the DMV

April 4, 2007 - *The Post and Courier*

In a letter to the editor today, Murray Jaffee details the numerous problems cited in a recent audit of the state Department of Transportation, and concludes by asking: "Why shouldn't the Department of Transportation be part of the governor's Cabinet, much like the Department of Motor Vehicles?"

Why not indeed?

Legislators who are working on a reform plan for the DOT should be confronted with that question, and should consider the indisputable improvements at the DMV since it became a Cabinet agency. Changes in the DMV have resulted in shorter lines, better customer service and increased efficiency.

It's not been too many years that the DMV was the red-haired stepchild of state government, at one point being shifted from the DOT to the Department of Public Safety because of its problems. It was considered an example of what was wrong about state government, with inadequate facilities, long waits, outmoded equipment and complicated procedures. That was before being taken over as a Cabinet agency by Gov. Mark Sanford early in his first term.

After it became a Cabinet agency, the DMV became a model of improvement and an argument for giving the governor responsibility across the range of state government. Unfortunately, the governor has authority over less than 20 percent of state government in this legislatively dominated state.

In DMV's case, the governor was able to implement major improvements, some of which had been previously recommended by auditors and legislators.

While a House bill would continue legislative appointments of the DOT commission, it would at least make the executive director part of the governor's Cabinet, and give the governor ultimately responsible for its operation. In contrast, the Senate bill, given final reading on Tuesday, increases legislative authority over all aspects of the agency with the creation of a new "oversight" committee. But the Legislature already has "overseen" the disaster that the DOT has become.

Changes at DMV provide examples of how the DOT can be improved. The agency has greatly enhanced customer service through the Internet. It has reduced the rate of uninsured drivers by providing law enforcement

with up-to-date information on cancellations of driver liability insurance. DMV is cooperating with a number of counties that want to provide vehicle registrations upon payment of property taxes. It offers written driving tests in high schools.

Most notably, DMV has reduced the average waiting time for customers from 66 minutes to less than 20 minutes. That's governmental reform that everyone can appreciate.

DMV efficiencies could well be applied to the Department of Transportation, if the Legislature will give the state's chief executive responsibility for the operation of the DOT, as is the case in 47 other states.

A conference committee will determine the final form of the reform bill for the DOT. Legislators should review the improvements at DMV as they ponder final changes to that proposal. Taxpayers and motorists should insist on it.