

My interest in this issue is in the **business** of government and making it as efficient and effective as possible – and not in getting into policy decisions. We should require that background checks are done in the most efficient and reasonable way possible, protecting the purpose of the background check while limiting adverse impacts and costs on workers and their employers – whether it's state agencies, businesses, or non-profit organizations.

In the course of explaining state budget cuts to local organizations that deliver programs which the state contracts for – I invited them to let me know about ways to make government more efficient so we could maximize the use of dollars for services. One of them told me that staff and volunteers at both Pearl Buck and Arc of Lane County have to get two CBCs: one from DHS MRDD, and one from the Child Care Division. People who provide respite care for foster care providers in the developmentally disabled area must get a CBC for each person they provide respite for, because the CBC is not transferrable, or acceptable, across foster care providers. A school employee working with school age children gets a CBC for that job, and then has to get another if they also work in a preschool setting. This is only a glimpse into the difficulty in one area.

This problem involves dozens of occupations, many different state agencies, and impacts a large number of Oregon businesses and organizations. Some of the materials I have received from a DAS analysis cover state agencies getting background checks on their employees. We should look at how background checks are accomplished for all the people that are required to have them ... state agency jobs and all the others, such as: home care workers; school employees; dentists, physicians, counselors and therapists, escrow agents, real estate appraisers, and funeral service providers.

Why are individuals or their employers paying for duplicated background checks? Could this repetitive effort, and cost, be avoided? Further, we have heard that the wait for results can be as much as 5-6 weeks, putting both the worker and the employer in a bind while a client is unable to receive services. This is really hard to hear at a time when people need work, employers have work that needs to be done, but our process is getting in the way.

Unfortunately this is simply fixing a bottleneck in a system –in this case, it appears that we, the state, don't actually have a unified system for background checks, we have multiple processes spun off from separate statutes, separate agency rules, and unconnected agency processes.

At state agencies, who actually conducts the criminal background check? In some it's an agency employee, like an office manager in the long term care ombudsman office, or the security section at the Oregon State Lottery. In others, such as the Board of Medical Imaging, it's the Oregon State Police. Why *do* individual state agencies each have varying processes and practices? While some specific pieces may be necessary, is some of it just because of TWADDY ("that's the way we've always done it")?

Can we identify some standard components of background checks, and design more standard processes to suit the type and level of background check needed?

Can we organize the work so that it's more streamlined?

We need to start shaping a better system, now.