

Letter: EDC needs better CAO hiring practices

To the community,

One of the most important jobs in El Dorado County is the county administrative officer. El Dorado County is currently looking for a new qualified candidate to replace the temporary CAO Larry Combs. While this process is stated to be an open state and national search, the county's past record shows that it is anything but.

There seems to be a closed loop within several neighboring counties that hires and promotes within a very narrow circle of friends. Apparently background checks were not made, or if the revelations revealed in this newspaper are accurate, these hires should have never been made.

Because the county failed to do basic background screening, the actions of several CAOs have cost the county millions of dollars in excess hiring and raises way above what the employee union asked for. Our Board of Supervisors should have demanded accountability and proof of thorough background checks with this hiring process. They did not. They just accepted the findings of HR or the prior CAO who are part of the problem.

The County Administrative Office monitors and oversees county operations to assure that board policies are carried out. The CAO recommends an annual budget and has the responsibility to administer that budget as approved by the BOS. The CAO is to provide organizational leadership and foster collaboration and partnership among all offices and departments, both elected and appointed

You would think that the BOS and the department heads directly affected by this person would have some role in the hiring

process. I believe that the BOS, if they interview at all, just believe what they are told without the needed thorough background check. The department heads have not been a part of the interview process for years.

Since the selection of a new CAO has been in the control of those who are in the circle of friends, the Board of Supervisors needs to witness just what is being circulated for the position and where they are being recruited from. They should have the pluses and minuses of each applicant, not just who the CAO or HR selects, and then be a part of the interview process along with select department heads. Maybe then we can get a capable, experienced candidate that may actually be more interested working for the county's best interests instead of feathering his or her own nest.

This is too important a position to continue with the round robin of friends that has been the case.

Paul Freeman, Cameron Park