

**To Whom It May Concern:**

As a former resource within Allen County government, I was tasked with managing projects requested by leadership for the betterment of operations. The definition of “betterment” being subjective yet nearly always rooted in the concept of accomplishing more while consuming the same or less human and/or fiscal resources than were currently being used.

A primary characteristic of Project Management is the resolution or mitigation of issues impeding progress towards the delivery of “betterment”.

So why write a letter about it you ask???

During more than 4 years serving as a Project Manager for Allen County the most prominent impediment was not a lack of processes or poorly articulated needs from requestors nor was it inadequate funding. In point of fact the largest impediment was a pervasive undercurrent of various forms of punishment should questions or actions not remain in alignment with the power structure.

I recently resigned my post as IT Project Manager and the situation surrounding this resignation shows clear hallmarks of the undercurrent referenced above. Those with a Marine background or familiar with the movie “A Few Good Men” might generally recognize this practice as a Code-Red. It widely known that the top leadership in local government (elected officials) are largely driven by political motivations, so what do you think happens when some foolhardy employee seeking to introduce efficiencies winds up shedding light on areas not necessarily in alignment with said political motivations? Can you handle the truth?

In my case, after it became clear that suppressing discussion through documented protocol and outright refusal of acknowledgement had failed to curtail my continued requests for clarification on certain potentially uncomfortable issues, my termination was requested. Using the County Commissioner’s as political cover I was administered the Code-Red beating and expelled from the unit. My personal experience, while representing thuggery and an egregious abduction of Commissioner political credibility, does not really raise an overly alarming number of red flags. Assessed at a more global level this practice represents an inherent and dangerously erosive infirmity in the local government system compromising the oversight responsibilities owed to taxpayers. I am unable to speak to the universality of this practice in other Counties; however it is quite likely that Allen County is more representative of the median than some extreme sinister outlier on the continuum of Code-Red usage.

A defining characteristic of this practice entails the creation of a sub-climate where employees are sent a clear yet ever so subtle message that a long and fruitful career requires a ready willingness of otherwise motivated employees to ignore issues in favor of a mindless reverence towards the sanctity of political interests.

One can easily comprehend the dangers associated with this practice given the backdrop of international financial crisis (a la Greece) and massive Federal, State, and Local government economic troubles. If left tucked safely in the shadows expediently avoiding further examination it will gain further inferred validity, continue to compromise positive contributions from local government employees, encourage an unhealthy bias towards unsound decision making, and further blur the lens of transparency so vital to the relationship between government and the taxpayer.

This letter is not some puerile attempt at retribution for the savage Code-Red beating that concluded my otherwise quite productive 4 plus year term as a County employee.

I was fully cognizant of the dangers associated with applying private sector project management principles in an environment where entrenched practice often called for the vicious mauling of any foolish enough to forgo political sanctity in favor of fiscal and business process logic. Gladly I endured these dangers and not once (until the day of my Code-Red) did those in leadership across the County have anything but positive commentary on my contributions.

In keeping with my local government career limiting tradition of not being a mindless sycophant, I chose to draft this letter making the citizens of Allen County aware of the risks employees within local government take daily as they attempt to best serve your needs.

I implore you to leverage your managerial power as both the voting base and funding source for County government to pay closer attention for signs of Code-Red abuse against employees. This is not to say that all activities within any local government (Allen County included) are flawed or have inappropriate motivation, but to say that as with any subversive tendency one must look past the obvious and into the facts to root out those instances where surface details are only a mask for Code-Red enforcement. Many in political power are reasonable fair-minded individuals very much aware of the negative consequences associated with this pervasive sub-cultural unwritten policy yet they are not immune from being subjected to a Code-Red beating for challenging or “GASP” trying to eradicate the practice.

Finally, this letter is being sent to those agencies and groups focused on local government policy reform. I am but a single voice and can easily be ignored and/or drowned out. Assessment of this sub-cultural unwritten policy must occur as it represents a potentially large contributing factor for government “Inefficiency” by virtue of fostering an employee selection process weeding out or silencing those resources capable of improving operations. This letter is a respectful request asking you to dedicate effort towards partnering with political leadership in Allen County and local governments across the State and Country to assure that employees maintain their role as a key source of innovation and retain their ability to invigorate/revitalize operations without being constantly fearful of receiving a vicious Code-Red as reward for their positive contributions.

**Regards,**

**Philip Pease, former Allen County IT Project Manager**