

Legislation Text

File #: ID-5381, **Version:** 1

Narrative of Resolution:

Calling for Study and Reform of NYS Civil Service System to support recruitment

If Resolution requires expenditure of County Funds, provide the following information:

Amount to be authorized by Resolution: 0

Are funds already budgeted? Choose an item.

Specify Compliance with Procurement Procedures:

RESOLUTION INTRODUCED BY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CALLING FOR STUDY AND REFORM OF NEW YORK STATE CIVIL SERVICE SYSTEM TO SUPPORT LOCAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE RECRUITMENT

WHEREAS, in New York, 16.4 percent of the workforce are employed by state, local, or federal level governments, providing needed services to our residents; and

WHEREAS, county governments employ more than 3.6 million public servants nationwide; and

WHEREAS, prior to the COVID pandemic, the public sector employment trend in New York was to do more with less, spurred on by state funding cuts in certain programs, resulting in a total workforce reduction of 4.5 percent from 2010 to 2020; and

WHEREAS, the Bureau of Labor Statistics showed this downturn in public employment levels has only worsened in the last two years, as the number of private sector jobs surpassed its pre-pandemic level, while there are 664,000 fewer people employed in the public sector; and

WHEREAS, the counties of New York have all expressed concerns over recent trends regarding the difficulty to hire and retain quality employees as this downturn in public employment levels is putting more stress on our local governments' abilities to provide needed services; and

WHEREAS, now counties are in a hiring crisis of a shrinking hiring pool and the increase in needed county skilled labor; and

WHEREAS, New York's counties all are seeking to increase employment numbers and create a qualified and diverse workforce; and

WHEREAS, current restrictions caused by New York State Civil Service Laws create hurdles that are stalling local governments' ability to expand their workforce; and

WHEREAS, while current New York State Civil Service Laws were put in place with good intentions, most were implemented prior to current societal and technological advancements and the time to study and improve

this system is long overdue; and

WHEREAS, State Civil Service system changes are needed for county governments to compete with the private sector for potential employees, including the ability to more quickly respond to candidates seeking employment; and

WHEREAS, county governments need hiring flexibility and are best situated to know what job titles should have residency requirements and which should have flexibility to ensure efficient and quality county services; and

WHEREAS, the Governor's proposed Executive Budget recognizes the need for Civil Service reform and proposes an idea the New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC) called for in 2022, continuous recruitment-allowing local governments the option to hold examinations continuously for candidates to apply at any time to take recruitment examinations; and

WHEREAS, Sullivan County thanks the Governor for seeking this needed change, and we call for more to be done to help cure the recruitment challenges we jointly face; and

WHEREAS, additional specific changes to NYS Civil Service Laws include but are not limited to:

- Codifying the electronic canvassing process authority-allowing email and phone contacts in lieu of mailing letters;
- Simplify standard grading metrics, make them understandable and predictable in order to assist potential applicants to take multiple-choice exams, as well as complete experience-based exams;
- Licensed occupation local approval-allowing local governments to bypass exam or civil service requirements for positions that require already approved and obtained New York accredited licenses;
- Transitioning from provisional to permanent appointments at local option-allow if a state test is not offered within nine months after an individual is provisionally appointed to a position, an employee becomes permanent and/or if an exam is offered within nine months, a person in the provisional appointment is scored as pass/fail on that exam;
- Allow at local option residency requirements-amend public officers law § 3 and 26 allow for full home rule authority to determine county employee residency requirements to increase the candidate pool; and
- Expand the number of eligible employees for appointments to a rule of 5-by expanding the rule of 3, would allow a higher number of candidates to be eligible to be canvassed when public employers are seeking employees.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the State must immediately reform NYS Civil Service Law; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, this reform must result in local governments' having more flexibility in hiring practices and the ability to more quickly respond to potential employees; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, counties seek these changes to meet public service needs with a quality workforce that best reflects the residents they serve; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be sent to the counties of New York encouraging member counties to enact similar resolutions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Sullivan County Legislature shall forward copies of this resolution to Governor Kathy Hochul, the New York State Association of Counties and all others deemed necessary and proper.