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**Testimony of the Department of Civil Service
Before the Joint Hearing of the Legislative Fiscal Committees
January 24, 2018**

Good morning Chairwoman Young, Chairwoman Weinstein, and distinguished members of the Senate Finance and Assembly Ways and Means Committees. My name is Lola Brabham and I serve as the Acting Commissioner for the Department of Civil Service. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you to comment on the Governor's Executive Budget for Fiscal Year 2019 as it relates to the Department of Civil Service, as well as to highlight some of our key accomplishments over the past year.

As the central personnel agency for State government, the Department of Civil Service delivers critical workforce management services and support to State entities, serving approximately 150,000 State employees. Over the past several years, the Department has worked diligently to advance initiatives to transform State government, improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of our programs and services, and strategically plan for tomorrow's workforce. I am pleased to report that last year the Department made great strides to modernize the State's approach to meeting workforce needs.

In 2017, to support effective workforce management and strategic planning across all State agencies, the Department released an updated version of the Workforce Analytics tool. This newest release provides the HR community with expanded data and reporting capabilities to make evidence-based decisions on workforce and succession planning.

In collaboration with OGS, ITS, and GOER, the Department is working to consolidate HR functions through a new HR management system. This consolidation will result in multiple benefits. It will streamline HR business processes, introduce greater self-

service opportunities for employees and HR professionals, and enable the retirement of outdated and unsupported legacy IT platforms.

In the area of workforce mobility, the Department continues to modernize the State's civil service title structure by streamlining the number of job classifications and enforcing consistent pay grades. In 2017, more than 100 distinct titles were consolidated, leading to improved recruitment and selection processes, and increased management and transfer flexibility throughout the State workforce. Further, the Department has enhanced the State's ability to fill hard-to-recruit positions in critical health, nursing, and medical professions by increasing salaries to better compete with the private sector.

State agencies and local governments rely upon the Department to administer consistent and timely civil service examinations to meet staffing needs and perform their core missions. Over the past year, the Department developed and administered more than 4,800 examinations, testing nearly 215,000 State and local candidates.

To improve examination services and maximize efficiencies, the Department is modernizing its approach to test development and delivery. This will enable greater use of online testing and streamline examination processes to further address critical workforce needs.

The Department has also expanded its efforts to promote interest in public service careers. Last year, the Department participated in more than 260 outreach and recruitment events, connecting with 20,000 jobseekers throughout New York State. These outreach efforts led to the expansion of new testing venues through partnerships with CUNY and SUNY to improve candidate access.

Following legislation signed by Governor Cuomo to further support veterans seeking employment in state government, the Department recently waived the required exam application fee for honorably discharged veterans.

The Department also provides technical assistance and training to 95 municipal agencies who are responsible for more than 360,000 local government employees. Over the past year, in addition to hosting the annual Civil Service Training Institute, the Department provided critical assistance to local administrators and elected officials, responding to more than 2,300 personnel matters.

In response to Women's Workforce Guidance legislation signed by Governor Cuomo, the Department, in collaboration with DOL, has undertaken extensive efforts to analyze data and develop strategies to support the State's efforts to attract and retain women in high-paying careers in State service. These efforts build upon Governor Cuomo's legacy of expanding opportunity for all New Yorkers and complement the Department's ongoing work to cultivate a more inclusive work environment.

The Department is proud to have worked collaboratively with the Executive Chamber and many State agencies to implement the nation's strongest and most comprehensive Paid Family Leave program. The Paid Family Leave benefit is now available for Executive Branch Management/Confidential employees, and we look forward to expanding the program to unionized State employees as agreements are made through collective bargaining.

Regarding the Department's role in administering the New York State Health Insurance Program, or NYSHIP, we continue to manage one of the most comprehensive public employer health insurance programs in the nation. NYSHIP provides coverage to more than 1.2 million State and local government employees, retirees, and their families.

In line with this, the Executive Budget includes proposals to help restrain the growth in State retiree health care costs.

In addition, the Department recently issued a Request for Proposals for a vendor to provide Empire Plan prescription drug benefits. We are currently evaluating proposals and vendor selection is expected in the next few months.

The initiatives highlighted today reflect the Department's continued focus on enhancing our systems and streamlining business processes to better meet State agency needs, while improving services for all New Yorkers.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am happy to answer any questions you have at this time.