

**Testimony of the Department of Civil Service
Before the Joint Hearing of the Legislative Fiscal Committees
February 11, 2014**

Good afternoon Chairman DeFrancisco, Chairman Farrell, distinguished members of the Senate and Assembly. I am Jerry Boone, Commissioner of the Department of Civil Service and I am pleased to appear before you today with Mike Volforte, Interim Director of the Governor's Office of Employee Relations. Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Governor's Executive Budget for 2014-15 as it relates to the Department of Civil Service, and to highlight some of the Department's accomplishments over this past year.

The Department has continued to further the Governor's initiatives to transform New York State government - to deliver new services, reorganize how functions are performed, and provide best of class services efficiently and effectively. To this end, the Department provided organizational and human resource guidance to a number of agencies, including the Justice Center, which was successfully launched in June 2013; the Business Services Center; the Office of Information Technology Services; the Gaming Commission; and the consolidated Call Centers. Additionally, Department staff has worked closely over this past fiscal year with the Department of Health on a number of the Governor's initiatives, including his Executive Order establishing the Health Insurance Exchange and the Medicaid Administration takeover from local social service offices.

As we know, employees are essential to the success of government and the Department has a lead role in providing the diverse talent agencies need to successfully provide critical services to the residents and customers of New York State. Last year, we shared with you our vision for the State's approach to more strategically delivering human resource management, in order to ensure a talented and diverse workforce. During the past year, Civil Service and GOER have made great strides in aligning the training activities of our respective agencies. The enhanced coordination and collaboration between our agencies has yielded our first joint initiative, Strategic Human Resources Management Training, which was conceived, planned, and developed in 2013 and launched in January 2014. This program will set the stage for transforming the role of Human Resources Directors in our State, from transactional to serving as strategic partners in workforce planning, performance management, employee engagement, and talent development.

Since the State's workforce is overwhelmingly competitive, examinations are the key mechanism used to fill both promotional and entry level opportunities. The Department must ensure that candidates possess the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to perform our important work. The Department continues to explore strategies to deliver examinations more frequently and efficiently. We strive to provide our existing talent with more prompt and meaningful opportunities for advancement. We seek to provide qualified candidates with a timely opportunity to compete for jobs, and to ensure that agencies can acquire new talent, to replenish and renew their workforce as experienced staff are promoted or retire. To provide more frequent promotional examinations for existing employees, the Department, utilizing a nationally recognized Industrial/Organizational

Psychology firm, is conducting a job analysis for over 1200 administrative titles in New York State government. The goal of this initiative is to identify those core competencies required for successful performance across specialist, supervisory and managerial positions, which will provide the necessary foundation for a State-wide selection program for these titles.

To attract new talent to the State's workforce, the Department recently announced an exciting recruitment and examination program, the Professional Career Opportunities exam, or "PCO" as we call it. The PCO is designed to draw a steady pool of diverse, talented college graduates (and those expected to graduate shortly) to entry level professional positions in public service, by providing a single mechanism to compete for over 100 entry level professional titles across State government. It modernizes and streamlines the examination process, and will be administered annually. The Department is also leveraging technology to administer this exam, with more online components than ever before; we also worked with the State's Media Services Center to develop a *YouTube* video as a recruitment tool.

In addition to kicking off these new testing initiatives, which we anticipate will help transform how the Department provides examinations, we developed and administered 533 examinations to more than 60,000 candidates for positions in State service. We also administered 2,847 exams to over 66,000 candidates for positions in local government service. Beyond examination services, the Department provided classification, staffing and other technical assistance to the 95 municipal civil service agencies (covering over 350,000 local government employees). We also conducted regional training on civil service administration for local commissions and personnel, with plans for additional training this coming year.

At the Governor's direction, the Department continues with extraordinary efforts to provide continuity of employment for those employees impacted by facility closures and realignments. As you may know, the Governor established the Continuity of Employment Task Force, which includes the Executive Chamber, the Department, GOER, DOB and the agencies impacted, including OPWDD, DOCCS, and OCFS, in February of 2013. Working as part of the Task Force, the Department has actively assisted employees through the Agency Reduction Transfer List Program, commonly referred to as ARTLs. This program is a discretionary tool used to maximize opportunities for the continued state employment of employees impacted by the realignment of the workforce. In order to expand such opportunities, *for the first time* the Department extended ARTL eligibility to permanent non-competitive and labor class employees, offering them competitive class opportunities. Additionally, the Department expanded both the duration of ARTLs and the number of titles to which employees were eligible for transfer, again to provide the greatest opportunity for continued employment. Staff from the Department's Career Mobility Office met with employees at the facilities affected to help them understand their reemployment opportunities and benefits. In addition to the ARTL process, Department staff has reviewed resumes and employment histories of impacted employees, to proactively pursue all possible avenues for continued employment.

The Department also administers the New York State Health Insurance Program (NYSHIP), one of the largest public employer health insurance programs in the nation, covering over 1.2 million lives consisting of State and local government employees, retirees and their families. I am delighted to report that the Department has successfully converted the Empire Plan to a self-funded basis, a major initiative authorized by legislation passed in 2010. In addition, recognizing that both the Departments of Health and Civil Service negotiate and purchase health insurance, a NYSHIP/DOH Purchasing Coordination steering committee was convened with staff from the Department, Department of Health, GOER and Division of the Budget. This initiative, first presented in the 2013-2014 Executive Budget, looks to identify ways to improve coordination of health care purchasing to take advantage of best practices and efficiencies.

As you can see, the Department is focused on increasing workforce efficiencies, thinking strategically and partnering with agencies across the State to improve services for all the citizens and customers of New York State.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I would be happy to address any questions you may have.