



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

## Griffo to introduce sign-on and retention bonus bill for police officers, nurses and teachers in New York

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO March 17, 2022

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In an effort to recruit and retain law enforcement, medical and education professionals, New York State Sen. Joseph Griffo, R-I-C-Rome, announced today that he is developing legislation that would utilize federal funding to enable local governments and other entities to provide sign-on bonuses to attract and keep police officers (including correctional officers), nurses, teachers and emergency medical technicians.

Sen. Griffo's proposed legislation would provide for one-time signing bonuses of \$7,500 and retention bonuses of \$2,500. The bill comes as New York is facing a significant shortage of workers in several fields in the coming years. For instance:

- A **report** from the state Department of Health indicates that there will be a shortage of over 39,000 RNs in New York State by 2030.
- **There** will be a need for 180,000 teachers over the next decade as 33% of active members could retire in the next five years, according to the New York State United Teachers.
- Many **police departments** have struggled to hire officers due to anti-police rhetoric, a lack of support and other issues.

- A 2019 **report** found that the number of certified EMS providers in New York has declined 9% in the last ten years, according to the New York State Department of Health Bureau of EMS.

“We must consider innovative solutions to address shortages in key segments of the state’s workforce, including sign-on and retention bonuses,” **Sen. Griffo said.** “New York State has the ability to cover these one-time bonuses thanks to funding from the federal government. We can use this funding to ease labor shortages and help recruit and retain teachers, nurses, emergency medical technicians and police officers.”

Sen. Griffo also has proposed a comprehensive initiative to recruit and retain primary care physicians and other specialists, especially in Upstate New York communities. The initiative would:

- Improve the Doctors Across New York program, which helps train and place physicians in underserved communities, by increasing the benefit for the programs that help recruit new physicians, help doctors repay educational loans or establish or join practices.
- Allow students enrolled in a state-supported medical school to participate in the Excelsior Scholarship program and for non-resident students residing within a certain distance of the border of New York State to have tuition rates reduced to two-thirds what they would otherwise be charged as an out-of-state student (S4580).
- Expand START-UP NY options to primary care (S4266) to allow physicians looking to establish a primary care office in the field of primary care services to access the START-UP NY program. Expanding the START-UP NY program to include primary care services also would increase access to primary care physicians in otherwise underserved areas of the state.

Additionally, the governor would be directed to task the state Department of Health with developing a designated shortage area for rural health clinics. The federal Department of Health and Human Services formulates what constitutes as underserved areas, as well as shortage areas. However, some rural areas cannot obtain federal benefits due to certain criteria that must be met in order to receive those benefits. A state designation opens the door for certain rural areas that might otherwise be forced to endure shortages without significant assistance.