

Warren County Board of Supervisors

RESOLUTION NO. 725 OF 2022

RESOLUTION INTRODUCED BY SUPERVISORS SEEBER, HOGAN, BRAYMER, LEGGETT AND DRISCOLL

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

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

WHEREAS, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the New York public sector was being asked to do more with less, as the total workforce was down 4.5 percent from 2010, and

WHEREAS, a recent study by the Bureau of Labor Statistics showed this downturn in public employment levels has only gotten worse, 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 Warren County Board of Supervisors have all expressed concerns over recent trends of hiring and retaining quality employees, as this downturn in employment numbers is putting more stress on local government's abilities to provide needed services, 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 Services 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, New York's Public Officers Law (POL) section 3 requires certain employees reside in the political subdivision or municipality in which they hold such public office, and

WHEREAS, since the 1970's, the State has authorized over 70 exceptions to POL residency requirements, including for police officers, in recognition that for many job specifications it is important to increase the potential hiring pool to obtain highly skilled employees, and

WHEREAS, now counties are in a hiring crisis due to shrinking the potential hiring pool and the increase in needed county skilled labor, and

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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, specific changes to New York State Civil Service Laws allowing for greater local government flexibility and quicker response time to hire needed employees include but are not limited to:

- Continuous Recruitment - allowing local governments the option to hold examinations continuously for candidates to apply at any time to take recruitment examinations;
- Electronic Canvassing Process - allowing email and phone contacts in lieu of mailing letters;
- Standard Grading Metrics should be simplified, understandable and predictable in order to assist potential applicants to take multiple-choice exams, as well as complete experience-based exams; and
- 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,

now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that New York State must immediately study and reform New York State Civil Service Law, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Warren County Board of Supervisors calls for the State of new York to amend Public Officers Law §3 and allow for full Home Rule Authority to determine county employee residency requirements, and be it further

RESOLVED, this study and 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 the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors shall forward copies of this resolution to Governor Kathy Hochul, the New York State Legislature and all others deemed necessary and proper.