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**Testimony of the Department of Civil Service
Before the Joint Hearing of the Legislative Fiscal Committees
February 5, 2020**

Good Morning Chairwoman Krueger, Chairwoman Weinstein, and distinguished members of the Senate Finance and Assembly Ways and Means Committees. My name is Lola Brabham and I am honored to serve as the Acting Commissioner of the Department of Civil Service. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Governor Cuomo's Executive Budget for Fiscal Year 2021 as it relates to the Department of Civil Service, as well as to highlight some of the Department's key accomplishments over the past year.

The Department of Civil Service is responsible for the administration of the civil service merit system and serves as the central Human Resource agency for State government. In this capacity, the Department provides workforce management services to 70 Executive-controlled State agencies, serving approximately 150,000 employees.

In addition, the Department is responsible for ensuring that State agencies and localities have the necessary talent to fulfill their core missions and to meet high-priority workforce needs. Over the past year, the Department has held approximately 6,000 civil service exams and tested more than 130,000 candidates for State and local government positions.

The Department continues to streamline the examination process through the use of technology and business improvements. In 2019, the Department collaborated with the Office of Information Technology Services to modernize the State's approach to test delivery. A new test management system has been designed and will be fully operational this year, which will streamline our examination process to be even more responsive to hiring needs.

In addition, the Department remains committed to providing resources to assist with workforce development, including guidance to State agencies in using Workforce Analytics. Workforce Analytics is a business intelligence tool that enables HR professionals to make evidence-based decisions on workforce and succession planning.

Through the Department's new Office of Diversity and Inclusion, the State is working at both the enterprise and agency levels to strengthen diversity, foster inclusive environments, and create pathways for better incorporating equal opportunity principles into the vital programs and services delivered to the public.

In 2019, a *Strategic Plan for Statewide Diversity and Inclusion* was created and distributed to State agencies to inform decision-making and enhance the competencies needed for building and sustaining a workforce that reflects the diversity of New York's communities. At the same time, the Department also began conducting comprehensive training to all State agencies under Executive control. The Department has trained more than 1,500 individuals on implicit bias and approximately 1,000 employees responsible for Reasonable Accommodation.

To create greater awareness and interest in employment opportunities, the Department participated in more than 250 outreach and recruitment events in 2019. These events complement the more targeted recruitment efforts of our State agency partners – so that they have a pipeline of talent available to meet their hiring needs.

Another responsibility of the Department is to provide oversight and guidance to 94 local civil service agencies responsible for approximately 360,000 employees. Over the past year, the Department responded to more than 2,800 requests for technical assistance

and trained more than 450 local government employees on topics related to merit system administration.

The Department also remains focused on administering NYSHIP – one of the nation's largest health insurance programs. Through a variety of employee benefit programs available to State employees under statute or through collective bargaining, NYSHIP provides comprehensive coverage to more than 1.2 million State and local government employees, retirees, and their dependents.

In addition, the Department remains engaged with the Workers' Compensation Board and the Governor's Office of Employee Relations, to deliver the State's Paid Family Leave program to Management/Confidential employees. In 2019, the Department expanded the benefit to include employees of the Division of Housing and Community Renewal represented by District Council 37, employees of the Tug Hill Commission, Interest on Lawyers Account, and the Roswell Park Cancer Institute. We look forward to expanding this benefit to additional employees as agreements are made through the collective bargaining process.

The initiatives that I have highlighted today reflect the Department's ongoing commitment to supporting strategic workforce needs. New Yorkers expect and deserve quality service from their State government, and we must continue to attract, hire, and retain a diverse and talented workforce to meet that demand.

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