

Testimony of Gary Johnson
on behalf of the Governor's Office of Employee Relations
February 27, 2013

Chairman DeFrancisco, Chairman Farrell, and members of the Committees. I serve as the Director of the Governor's Office of Employee Relations, GOER. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to address Governor Cuomo's Executive Budget for 2013-2014 as it relates to GOER. It's my pleasure to appear with Commissioner Boone.

At GOER, my staff and I work every day to foster constructive and cooperative relationships with the State workforce and their representatives, the State employee unions, in order to create the *New New York* that Governor Cuomo envisions. As a result of determined and respectful efforts, we have successfully reached fair contracts with NYSCOPBA and Council 82 that rebalanced health insurance premium contributions, included sensible changes in employee health plan design changes, limited overtime costs, and controlled wage rates, including a first-time Deficit Reduction Plan, and we recently reached a tentative agreement with United University Professions, subject to ratification, that captures savings on the pattern established with the other bargaining units. With the same need for budgetary discipline in mind, we continued a hiring freeze on non-essential positions and eliminated funded vacant positions.

This year's budget further anticipates some agency restructuring. While some of the state's employees who will be affected will be offered a comparable job opportunity in state service, training will be made available to others to help State employees secure an opportunity best suited to their skills. By the same token, the budget anticipates investing in new positions where there's a demonstrated need, such as implementing the new Healthcare Exchange, and staffing the new Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs.

If the performance of State workforce is to advance, then we have to re-envision the State's approach to human resource management in order to grow a talented and diverse workforce. As Commissioner Boone has noted, the 2013-14 Budget proposes the creation of the New York State Center for Employee Workforce Development, by administratively aligning the

recruitment and training activities of the Department of Civil Service and the Governor's Office of Employee Relations.

The present bifurcated model does not serve the State in the best way possible. Creating the Center for Employee Workforce Development will position the State, for the first time, to conduct all of its recruitment and training from a single, smart, strategic agency locus. By aligning the efforts of the two agencies in these areas, we can marshal our resources as a single enterprise to develop future managers and staff, plan for succession as workforce ages, and diversify hiring to expand and enrich our pool of employee talent.

The Center will continue the momentum created last year by GOER's launch of the State's first Statewide Learning Management System. SLMS has become a key component in the State's ability to operate across all agencies as a single employer, by providing the workforce with integrated, desktop access to the full spectrum of the State's training offerings, and by providing all agencies the ability to access employees' training records, from the start of their careers to retirement.

This year, we will build on the gains we made last year and continue to increase the capacity and skills of the state workforce, while continuing to control costs. We are confident we can.

Thank you again, and I will take your questions.