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**Testimony of the Department of Civil Service
Before the Joint Hearing of the Legislative Fiscal Committees
February 3, 2016**

Good afternoon Chairwoman Young, Chairman Farrell and distinguished members of the Senate Finance and Assembly Ways and Means Committees. I am Lola Brabham, Executive Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Civil Service. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you to comment on the Governor's 2016-17 Budget.

The Department continues to explore innovative ways to help agencies meet their workforce needs. Last year's enacted budget authorized the Department to work with pilot agencies to launch a Civil Service Reform initiative designed to streamline processes and identify efficiencies related to workforce mobility, recruitment, and testing. The initiative has already yielded a number of valuable resources. For example, a web-based *Workforce Succession Planning and Knowledge Transfer Guide* is currently being tested by the pilot agencies, and we anticipate it will be available to all agencies by the end of March.

In the area of workforce mobility, the Department has been successful in consolidating job titles. While not impacting salary or compensation, title consolidation simplifies recruitment and increases opportunities for current employee mobility throughout the State workforce. It makes the examination process more efficient, and expedites the establishment of eligible lists. I'm pleased to report that these efforts, which focus on the most populous titles common across State agencies, have already resulted in the consolidation of 20 clerical job titles into four, and 40 human resources (HR) job titles into 20, that better reflect the more complex and modern role of the HR

professional. The next phase of the title consolidation initiative, will focus on Investigator titles - and is expected to consolidate the current 88 agency-specific titles into 34 titles.

In addition, the Department recently provided a new HR analytics tool, *Workforce Analytics*, to State agencies. The new system is a business intelligence tool that provides critical data for strategic HR management. The Department collaborated with the Division of Budget, the Governor's Office of Employee Relations and the Office of Information Technology Services to develop this tool. It provides HR professionals with access to reliable and consistent data such as -- employee counts by title, years in title, service credits, and retirement tier information.

State agencies and local governments rely on the Department for consistent and timely civil service examinations to meet their staffing needs for competitive positions. Over the past year, the Department administered nearly 5,000 examinations, testing over 140,000 candidates for State and local government titles. The Department continuously explores how to efficiently and effectively deliver examination services. To this end, the Department is working to streamline our examination programs, and make better use of technology, including computer-based testing, in the delivery of our tests.

The Department also released a Request for Information (RFI) focused on expanding computer-based testing. Results from the RFI are being used to develop business requirements for the issuance of a Request for Proposals (RFP) in 2016 designed to enhance our computer-based testing program.

To expedite appointments to high-priority titles that require pre-employment examinations, we are implementing operational enhancements to our Employee Health Services Division. We plan to partner with agencies to strategically locate medical sites

throughout the State to expedite examinations. Further, we will improve service to Western New York and New York City by hiring additional medical personnel. We will also enhance our network to provide psychological assessment services throughout the State to maximize the available number of locations, so candidates can more quickly meet pre-employment medical examination requirements.

Increasing diversity in the State workforce is of critical importance – and the Department shares this responsibility with its client agencies. Our outreach efforts complement the targeted recruitment of State agencies seeking skillsets tailored to their operational needs. Over the past year, the Department participated in over 130 outreach efforts, connecting with 8,500 participants. Working with the State's Chief Diversity Officer, we are exploring ways of expanding our outreach to diverse communities. The Department will continue to actively participate in recruitment events that serve minority populations including conferences of the New York State Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian Legislative Caucus, Somos el Futuro and the Legislative Conference of the Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force.

The Department also continues to provide vital advice, assistance and training to local governments across the State. We provide on-going refresher training for experienced HR professionals and a comprehensive three week course, annually, for newly appointed administrators. In 2015, the Department provided training to over 260 local government representatives.

Regarding the Department's role in administering the New York State Health Insurance Program, or NYSHIP, we continue to efficiently manage one of the largest

public employer health insurance programs in the nation. NYSHIP covers over 1.2 million State and local government employees, retirees and their families.

Consistent with the Governor's focus on fiscal discipline, the Department has undertaken a number of initiatives to ensure the integrity of the benefits program, and the fundamental equity of the benefits enrollees receive. In line with this, the Executive Budget includes proposals to better structure and align health insurance premium contributions to restrain the growth of spending by the State.

Last year, the Department outlined a plan to audit NYSHIP enrollment to ensure that ineligible dependents do not claim or receive benefits. As part of the audit, a one-time amnesty period is authorized for members that self-identify any ineligible dependents. Once the period closes and the audit begins, enrollees will be required to provide proof of eligibility for their dependents.

The Department also continues to implement requirements of the Affordable Care Act or ACA. The Department has been working with its partner agencies including the Office of the State Comptroller and the Office of Information Technology Services to fulfill new ACA compliance reporting responsibilities, including new annual reports and filings that must be provided to both employees and the Internal Revenue Service that the State is providing affordable health coverage to its employees.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.