

**Testimony by Thomas Melito  
Suffolk County Acting Personnel Officer**

Good Morning. My name is Thomas Melito and I'm the Acting Personnel Officer for Suffolk County. For the last 8 years I held the position of Deputy County Executive. As of Jan 3<sup>rd</sup> I was appointed to this position. I'm here with County Executive Steve Bellone.

A most critical aspect in achieving the mission of governmental excellence revolves around the appropriate and strategic management of the organization's talent base; the County's most precious and expensive resource. This starts with recruitment.

A fundamental challenge, once employees have been recruited, is to combine the practice of management with finding ways to keep public employees engaged, motivated, challenged and committed. This requires an interplay between Civil Service and local Human Capital Management practices.

The work of government has changed dramatically over the last 20 years adding complexity to workforce management. Civil Service and its member municipalities both need to more fully understand these complexities, take them into account, plan for and put strategies in place to position our organizations most favorably within the context of governmental mission, an understanding of required employee attributes and the requirements of the labor market we depend on.

We agree whole heartedly with the need to attract highly skilled **new college graduates**. We propose creation of new job classification targeted to them. These positions would require no initial test with perhaps a two year term. Candidates could be recruited and placed

within the organization by study areas such as management, technology, science, accounting etc. To increase the chances of retention we also propose creating mentorship programs to usher new graduates through the process of acclimating to the organization and forming relationships that are valuable. These graduates could be hired with no test.

Similarly we would like greater flexibility in hiring **senior management leadership** and executive titles. Political turnover in government is straining the ability at all levels to retain the type of knowledge based, experientially seasoned management capabilities needed to support the long-term health of our public institutions. Like with new college graduates we believe that a new classification of senior executive could provide such flexibility.

**Finally, we would like to expand top selectable candidates to include those in the top 3 scoring bands** to allow for greater flexibility in identifying talent and making hiring decisions. This would provide an ability to evaluate other qualitative attributes in new-hires and those up for promotions such as professionalism, experience, past performance (educational and professional), maturity and creativity.

In short our public institutions require an effective partnership to include civil service and local human capital management that allows public organizations greater flexibility to attract and retain competent, high quality candidates to public service, while providing a work-life experience that reflects the needs of the broader labor market, rewards high performance and develops and utilizes top notch leadership at all levels.

A stronger partnership (between NYS and the municipalities it serves) could operate as a true shared service in accord with a Human Capital Management set of policies designed to create access to labor markets and support municipalities when competing for, recruiting, investing in and retaining talent.

This could start by allowing municipalities to file Human Capital Management Plans with State Civil Service. Once reviewed and approved by NYS as to the due diligence exhibited in the plan, grant additional flexibilities in making decisions as discussed above.

We would appreciate an opportunity to continue a formal dialogue with New York State Civil Service and municipalities across the State to more fully vet some of these ideas and develop proposals for others.