



Civil Service and Pension Reforms as Part of the State Budget

Dear Legislator:

As a constituent and a state employee represented by the Public Employees Federation (PEF), I write asking that the final budget agreement contain civil service upgrades and pension reforms. These needed changes would help greatly with recruitment and retention of state employees, as well as provide a general sense of fairness.

New York is facing a crisis with 12,500 fewer state employees than before the pandemic. This means reduced and slower services for New Yorkers who require assistance, whether it is unemployment insurance, health care, mental health services or community safety.

The Governor's budget includes initiatives to allow for continuous recruitment testing (S.4005/A.3005 Part S), study state workspaces and consider hybrid work schedules (\$4.5 million), create 12 Centers for Careers in Government (\$2 million), start a "Public Service Matters" campaign (\$2.3 million) and evaluate all state job titles and pay equity (\$2.2 million). All state employees should receive an immediate upgrade of two pay grades to close the gap with private sector salaries.

In addition, Tier 6 retirement for state workers hired after 2012 has provided much lower benefits to new employees and is often mentioned as one of the main reasons why workers leave state service. You made progress last year by reverting vesting time back to five years and removing COVID-19 overtime from pension contribution calculations for employees.

Now, we must standardize the 3% pension contribution rate for all employees. The increased percentage for newer workers is a disincentive for them to make a career of public employment and penalizes those who receive promotions or negotiated raises. A well-deserved retirement is one of the most attractive benefits of state employment and the 3% rate should be reinstated for all workers.

As my elected representative, I ask that you work with the leadership in your house to accept the Governor's civil service changes, including S.4005/A.3005 Part S, and amend the state's pension program to provide equity for current state employees. Thank you for your time, attention and consideration of this very important issue.

Sincerely,
