



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 273

Resolution calling on New York State to offer civil service exams, training materials, and assistance, at all Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) facilities.

By Council Members De La Rosa, Gutiérrez, Cabán, Ossé, Avilés, Banks, Williams and Hudson

Whereas, America has the highest incarceration rate in the world - 629 per 100,000 people - compared to Rwanda, the second highest with a rate of 580 per 100,000; and

Whereas, In 2019, there were approximately two million people behind bars in this country; and

Whereas, In New York State's prison system, there were more than 7,500 people incarcerated as of March 2021; and

Whereas, Reentry into the workforce after release from jail or prison is crucial for those formerly incarcerated, their families, and society at large; and

Whereas, For instance, research shows that a steady job and regular income reduces recidivism, thereby increasingly public safety; and

Whereas, Meanwhile, the national economy is harmed when these individuals are excluded from the workforce; and

Whereas, Data from 2016, for example, showed that the country's "annual gross domestic product (GDP) was reduced \$78-87 billion due to the exclusion of people with felony convictions from the workforce. When accounting for the exclusion from entrepreneurial opportunities and the exclusion of those with misdemeanor convictions, the impact to GDP is likely to be higher"; and

Whereas, Furthermore, with employment often being a condition of parole, those reentering the workforce after incarceration, even if they find employment, are vulnerable to exploitation, feeling forced to

accept low-paying jobs or poor working conditions; and

Whereas, Alternatively, employment in the civil service offers job security, health and labor benefits and long-term career opportunities; and

Whereas, In order to ensure people are suitable for positions within the public service, the process involves taking an exam and being entering onto a hiring list; and

Whereas, The exams protect against nepotism and favoritism, but the process can be long and burdensome; and

Whereas, Offering assistance, information and training materials to those in DOCCS facilities would allow more incarnated people the opportunity to join the civil service; and

Whereas, The Biden Administration recently recognized this important pathway and have developed a Guide to Federal Employment for Second Chance Applicants, and held webinars and briefing seminars in order to boost recruitment of previously incarcerated individuals into the federal workforce; and

Whereas, California is also taking steps to expand the opportunities of the civil service to those previously incarcerated; and

Whereas, In November 2021, the California State Prison is Solano held a civil service workshop and hiring event, the second time it has done so; and

Whereas, After the event, a number of incarcerated individuals took the entry-level Highway Maintenance Worker or Landscape Maintenance Worker exam; and

Whereas, Nearly all of the applicants were successful on the exam and secured conditional job offers; and

Whereas, In addition to making the civil service more diverse, helping formerly incarcerated individuals find secure, well-paying jobs that can lead to long-term careers is important; and

Whereas, Secure employment is a cornerstone of successful reentry and the civil service offers this foundation; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the city of New York calls on New York State to offer civil service exams, training materials, and assistance, at all Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) facilities.

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