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A Local Law to amend the New York city charter, in relation to establishing a city employee poll worker program.

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Legislative Findings. Voting is at the heart of our democratic process. Since the 2000 presidential election and through the implementation of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), the voting process has faced increasing scrutiny and undergone substantial change. New York City experienced firsthand during the primary election in 2010 the challenges new voting processes and more rigorous election requirements can place on poll workers, who face longer work days and more complex administrative tasks than in the past. The Board of Elections in the City of New York typically recruits half of the 30,000 poll workers it needs with most of the remainder being provided by the district leaders as prescribed in Election Law. This is a challenging endeavor, given the difficulties of finding qualified workers for what is essentially a temporary job that requires only a few days of work. While the Board of Elections expanded its recruitment efforts in 2011, a more comprehensive approach that will produce civic-minded, qualified poll workers is needed to address the thousands of positions that went unfilled during the 2010 elections. City employees represent an underutilized pool of potential applicants for poll worker positions. By encouraging city employees to serve as poll workers on election day, the City can help to improve electoral administration and preserve the integrity of our elections.

§ 2. Subdivision b of section 1054 of chapter forty-six of the New York city charter is amended by adding a new paragraph 8 to read as follows:

8. (a) develop and administer a city employee poll worker program for employees of participating agencies. Employees participating in such program who serve as poll workers for the general election in the city of New York shall be entitled to receive the poll worker stipend as paid by the board of elections.

(b) No later than March 1 of each year, the board shall distribute a program calendar to participating agencies identifying deadlines related to the recruitment of city employees for participation in the program containing the following information: (i) the date by which agency coordinators must be chosen; (ii) the period during which participating agencies shall recruit employee volunteers; (iii) deadlines for submitting poll worker applications to the board of elections; (iv) poll worker training dates; (v) deadlines by which agency coordinators must provide to the board of elections a final list of city employees who elected to participate in the program; and (vi) such other information as the board shall deem relevant.

(c) Participating agencies shall include all agencies designated as participating agencies under section 1057-a of this chapter and any other agency or agencies designated for participation in such program by the mayor. Each participating agency shall designate an agency employee to serve as agency coordinator to facilitate the administration of the program. Each agency coordinator, during the period specified by the program calendar, shall recruit employees from his or her respective agency to work as poll workers on election day. Such recruitment shall, at a minimum, consist of two email or other communications providing information about the program, including: (i) application forms and materials provided by the board of elections; (ii) a description of the types, requirements for, and the responsibilities of poll worker positions; (iii) the available poll worker stipends; and (iv) notice that city employees who participate in the program and serve as poll workers are eligible to receive such stipends. Heads of participating agencies, or their designee(s), may

also make available via announcements at meetings, agency bulletin boards, memos, or any other means, opportunities for the agency coordinator to promote the program.

(d) The agency coordinator shall assist employees who elect to participate in the program in applying to become poll workers in the manner prescribed by the board of elections. Each agency coordinator shall provide to the board, on or prior to the date as set by the program calendar pursuant to subdivision b, a list of employees of such agency who have elected to participate in the program.

(e) In order to participate in the program, an employee of a participating agency must meet all of the requirements mandated by the board of elections, including attendance at training session(s) as prescribed by the election law. The head of each participating agency, or his or her designee, shall determine whether employees who elect to participate in the program shall be granted a leave of absence with pay for attendance at a mandated training session. Any city employee who participates in the program and attends a training session shall be eligible to receive the poll worker stipends and bonuses paid by the board of elections for the completion of such training and subsequent work on election day.

(f) No later than December 1, 2012, and no later than every December 1 thereafter, each participating agency shall report to the mayor and the council the number of employees of such agency that elected to participate in the program and the number of employees of such agency that served as poll workers on election day.

§ 3. This local law shall take effect ninety days following enactment.

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