



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 257-A

Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign, legislation that would amend the social services law, in relation to prohibiting work experience programs in New York City.

By Council Members Mealy, Dickens, King, Rose, Chin, Johnson, Levine, Kallos, Palma, Levin, Torres, Rosenthal, Menchaca, Constantinides, Arroyo and Richards

Whereas, The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families ("TANF") program provides public assistance including, but not limited to, cash assistance and work opportunities to families in need by granting states federal funds through the TANF block grant; and

Whereas, States that receive the TANF block grant funds are given the flexibility to design and implement their own programs to accomplish the goals of TANF; and

Whereas, The goals of the TANF program are to: 1) assist families in need so that children can be cared for in their own homes; 2) reduce the dependency of parents in need by promoting job preparation, work and marriage; 3) prevent out-of-wedlock pregnancies; and 4) encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families; and

Whereas, TANF places an emphasis on working for one's benefits and requires each state to meet a 50 percent work activity engagement rate for all families receiving public assistance in order for the state to receive the maximum TANF grant amount, the remaining 50 percent of a state's caseload is work-exempt and does not need to be engaged in a work activity; and

Whereas, The Work Experience Program ("WEP"), is a work program in New York City administered by the Human Resources Administration ("HRA"), designed to place public assistance recipients in work experience assignments in order to receive cash assistance and help meet the state's mandated work engagement

requirement; and

Whereas, As of May 4, 2014 there were 11,450 people enrolled in WEP receiving public assistance in New York City; and

Whereas, WEP participants are not considered employees, do not receive a paycheck, are not eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit, collective bargaining, unemployment or social security benefits; and

Whereas, Additionally, WEP participants do not receive education or training and rarely advance from their assigned position; and

Whereas, WEP provides New York City with a source of inexpensive labor because WEP participants are not paid by their employers and instead are subsidized by TANF; and

Whereas, According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, TANF benefit levels are not high enough in any state to raise a family's income above 50 percent of the poverty line and TANF does much less to help families overcome deep poverty than it did prior to welfare reform, which required recipients to work in order to receive public benefits; and

Whereas, Therefore, because WEP does not provide enough financial resources to help a family overcome poverty and also does not provide appropriate training or education so a recipient could become qualified for a higher wage job, its effectiveness is questionable; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign, legislation that would amend the social services law, in relation to prohibiting work experience programs in New York City.

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