



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0264-2004, **Version:** *

Res. No. 264

Resolution calling for a cost of living adjustment for all senior center employees and all employees who serve seniors whose employers receive funding through City contracts.

By Council Members Dilan, Addabbo, Jr., Baez, Barron, Clarke, Fidler, Foster, Gerson, Gonzalez, James, Lopez, Martinez, Nelson, Palma, Quinn, Sanders, Stewart, Vann, Weprin, Gennaro, Jackson and Reed

Whereas, The employees of New York City's senior centers and other aging services last received a cost of living salary increase in April 1999; and

Whereas, Before April 1999, the New York City Department for the Aging's (DFTA) standard practice was to provide employees with salary increases whenever the City negotiated a new contract with District Council 37, the largest public employee union in the City, representing over 125,000 workers and 1,000 job titles; and

Whereas, DFTA stated at a joint hearing of the Committee on Civil Service and Labor and the Subcommittee on Senior Centers, held on March 1, 2004, that the agency has not deliberately failed to provide funds for salary increases, but rather has been denied requests for "special needs" from the Office of Management and Budget, which, if granted, would have paid for such increases; and

Whereas, According to District Council 1707, base average salary of a professional care worker at a senior center or other aging service is approximately \$22,000 with some employees making as low as \$12,000; and

Whereas, Since 1999, according to statistics from the Human Services Council (HSC), senior center and other aging services employee salaries have cumulatively decreased by 27% due to the lack of a cost of living adjustment, when compared to the New York Metropolitan region Consumer Price Index; and

Whereas, According to DFTA and testimony received at the March 1, 2004 hearing, an estimated \$6.1 million in “new need” funding is needed to correct this problem and give a cost of living adjustment to senior center and other aging services employees; and

Whereas, According to District Council 1707, it is “essential for this workforce to receive a 3% cost of living adjustment this year;” and

Whereas, According to testimony that was given at the March 1, 2004 hearing, workplace issues, such as low wages, lead to high turnover rates and cause little interest from qualified workers to enter into the field of providing certain services to seniors; and

Whereas, Testimony from HSC indicates an annual turnover rate of direct care workers at senior centers and other aging services of 37.5%; and

Whereas, The Council of Senior Centers and Services of New York City (CSCS) contends that the elderly are directly affected by this high turnover rate because they lose the benefits of qualified professional staff with whom they can build a long-term relationship; and

Whereas, Additionally, testimony received at the March 1, 2004 hearing from organizations such as CSCS, the Jewish Association for Services for the Aged and District Council 1707 indicates that the only way to recruit and retain employees at senior centers and other aging services is to terminate positions, reduce staffing hours, switch health care plans or eliminate benefits altogether; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls for a cost of living adjustment for all senior center employees and all employees who serve seniors whose employers receive funding through City contracts.

THC - LS# 595
3/22/04