



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0185-2026, **Version:** *

Res. No. 185

Resolution calling on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, legislation that would remove the citizenship requirement for police officers and firefighters, extending eligibility to persons legally authorized to work in the United States

By Council Members Farías and Louis

Whereas, New York State law requires individuals to be United States citizens to serve as public officers, thus excluding many New Yorkers, who under federal law are legally authorized to work in the United States, from contributing to their communities in these crucial roles; and

Whereas, Many municipalities in New York State, including New York City (City), are experiencing significant workforce shortages in essential public service roles like policing and firefighting; and

Whereas, According to a May 2024 report by the New York State Comptroller on City staffing trends, overall employment has increased since the peak City vacancy rate in December 2022; and

Whereas, However, public safety roles, including police and fire officers, have experienced steady rates of attrition; and

Whereas, According to the State Comptroller's report, the City Police Department has experienced a 39.1% increase in attrition compared to pre-pandemic levels and the City Fire Department has experienced a 52% increase in attrition; and

Whereas, Expanding eligibility to legally authorized workers would help fill these critical gaps, ensuring that communities have the necessary personnel to maintain public safety and essential services; and

Whereas, Filling public service positions with qualified individuals helps to maintain the economic stability of municipalities by ensuring that essential services are adequately staffed, reducing overtime costs,

lowering burnout rates, and improving overall efficiency in public service delivery; and

Whereas, Additionally, City Police and Fire Departments require a diverse and representative workforce to effectively serve all communities; and

Whereas, If allowed to hire legally authorized individuals, the City could draw from a broader pool of candidates, potentially increasing the number of qualified applicants with diverse language skills, cultural understanding, and community ties-factors that can significantly improve public trust and safety outcomes; and

Whereas, Furthermore, many individuals who are legally authorized to work in the United States have a deep commitment to their communities and a desire to contribute positively; and

Whereas, Denying them the opportunity to serve in public officer roles disregards their potential contributions while allowing them to serve would acknowledge their rights and abilities, promoting inclusivity and fairness; and

Whereas, In the 2023-2024 New York State legislative session, Senator Julia Salazar introduced S.9548-A, which seeks to allow individuals who are legally authorized to work in the United States under federal law to be eligible to serve as police officers and firefighters; and

Whereas, Expanding eligibility for public service roles to legally authorized workers supports New York State's public safety, economic stability, and commitment to diversity and inclusion, while also addressing critical workforce shortages in essential public services; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, legislation that would remove the citizenship requirement for police officers and firefighters extending eligibility to persons legally authorized to work in the United States.