



**Written Public Hearing Testimony of
Sharon Palmer, Commissioner
Department of Labor
Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee
March 4, 2014**

Good Afternoon Senator Kissel, Representative Mushinsky, Senator Fonfara, Representative Carpino and members of the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with written testimony regarding **House Bill No. 5376: AA Implementing the Recommendations of the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee on the Reemployment of Older Workers as they Relate to the Board Of Regents for Higher Education**. My name is Sharon Palmer and I am the Labor Commissioner.

I support the concept of this bill, but recognize that there are considerations that must be taken into account before obligating the Department with significant data collection efforts. This bill requires the Department of Labor to produce reports containing data regarding job retention and earnings of students enrolled in academic and noncredit vocational courses and programs, both prior to enrollment and after completion of such course and programs, which should be sorted by student age. While it would be possible for the Department to produce employment reports for this group, measuring job retention is complicated. It would require the Department to follow individuals across time and would require the agency to interpret job retention data without guidance as to whether the data regarding job retention is negative or positive. In addition, the Department cannot currently measure wage rates. Our wage records contain only total quarterly wages only, not hours or weeks worked in that quarter. It would be a significant cost to the agency to report the data at this level.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony today.