

No. \_\_\_\_\_

## **MOTION OF THE COUNCIL OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY**

Authorizing the establishment of a County Council Returnship Program, to identify candidates who have suffered from long term unemployment for temporary employment with the Office of County Council.

**WHEREAS**, the worker participation rate in America is close to 38-year low as there are 94 million people not currently working; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), as the duration of unemployment increases, the likelihood of becoming employed in the following month declines. In 2014, about 35 percent of people who had been out of work less than 5 weeks found work in the next month; about 11 percent of people who had been out of work for 1 year or longer became employed in the following month; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) the incidence of long-term unemployment increases with age. In 2014, for example, 22.1 percent of the unemployed under age 25 had looked for work for 27 weeks or longer, compared with 44.6 percent of those 55 years and older; and

**WHEREAS**, on November 2, 2015 Vice President Stephen Williamson of the St. Louis Federal Reserve issued a report that stated:

- One dimension of labor market performance that has not returned to levels which we would consider normal before the Great Recession is long-term unemployment;
- The number of long-term unemployed is still larger than at any time between the past two recessions; and
- They are unlikely to be hired under any conditions if their skills don't match what employers want.

**WHEREAS**, in paper titled "Are the Long-Term Unemployed on the Margins of the Labor Market?" by Princeton University Economists, Judd Cramer, David Cho, Alan B. Krueger issued in March of 2014:

- The portrait of the long-term unemployed in the United States that emerges here suggests that, to a considerable extent, they are an unlucky subset of the unemployed, and that their prospects decline the longer they remain unemployed, possibly because their skills atrophy.

- A concerted effort will be needed to raise the employment prospects of the long-term unemployed. Otherwise, these job seekers will continue to drop out of the workforce and hold the economy back.

**WHEREAS**, individuals suffer from long term unemployment for a number of reasons, including age, illness, injury, disability, opting to continue their education, caring for an aging or ill family member, devoting time to raising children, relying upon income streams that do not involve traditional employment, or having a particularly specialized skill set that limits potential employment settings; and

**WHEREAS**, numerous companies – including Goldman Sachs, who actually trademarked the term “returnship” in 2008 when it initiated its original program geared toward facilitating the return of women to the workplace after taking time off to raise their families - have initiated similar programs which are specifically geared towards assisting individuals in re-starting their careers after prolonged absence from the workforce; and

**WHEREAS**, in addition to Goldman Sachs, these companies include CapitalOne, MetLife, and Morgan Stanley, while other entities such as [www.irelaunch.com](http://www.irelaunch.com) are specifically geared towards assisting individuals who wish to return to the workforce after a lengthy absence; and

**WHEREAS**, it is accordingly the judgment of Council that individuals that have suffered from long term unemployment (i.e. unemployment for a period of 27 weeks or longer) are particularly vulnerable to the continuation of their unemployment, and are therefore increasingly likely to require additional assistance subsidized or funded by federal, state or local government; and

**WHEREAS**, it is further the judgment of Council that it is highly desirable and sound public policy to reduce the effects of long term unemployment to the extent practicable; and

**WHEREAS**, it is further the judgment of Council that the establishment of a program geared towards providing 10 to 12 week long internships for individuals suffering from long term unemployment within the Office of County Council would be beneficial both to the Council and to the individuals participating in the program, as this Council can harness the exceptional qualities that these individuals possess while at the same providing the necessary work experience to bring these individuals back into the workforce who have potentially been unemployed for a long period of time; and

**WHEREAS**, it further the judgment of Council that the government of Allegheny County along with private employers located within Allegheny County should be encouraged to establish similar programs;

**NOW THEREFORE, IT IS MOVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY,**

The Council is hereby authorized to establish a returnship program for qualified candidates who have suffered from long term unemployment for employment with the Office of County Council.

**IT IS FURTHER MOVED** that the parameters within which this program will function shall be determined and established by the Executive Committee.

***PRIMARY SPONSOR: COUNCIL MEMBER KRESS***

In Council \_\_\_\_\_, 2017.

**Read and Approved.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**John DeFazio  
President of Council**

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
**Jared E. Barker  
Allegheny County Council**