§ 55-a. Employment of persons with disabilities by municipalities. 1. Municipal civil service commissions in the state may, by rule, determine a prescribed number of positions, not to exceed seven hundred positions, with duties which can be performed by physically or mentally disabled persons who are found qualified, in the manner hereafter prescribed, to perform satisfactorily such duties.

2. Upon such a determination, such positions shall be classified in the non-competitive class, and shall be filled by persons who shall have been certified by either the commission for the blind in the state office of children and family services as physically disabled by blindness or by the state education department as otherwise physically or mentally disabled and, in any event, qualified to perform satisfactorily the duties of any such position. At least three hundred of such positions shall be filled by persons who have been certified as physically disabled. If no qualified physically disabled persons have applied for such positions, the municipal civil service commission may fill those unfilled positions with qualified mentally disabled persons.

3. Prior to making certification of physically or mentally disabled persons for any such position, the commission for the blind in the case of persons physically disabled by blindness or the state education department in the case of persons otherwise physically or mentally disabled shall obtain from the appropriate municipal civil service commission a detailed description of all duties of the position, and shall investigate the extent of the disability by examination of any such person or otherwise, and shall determine and report its findings to the appropriate civil service commission, as to the ability of the disabled person to perform the duties of such position. Such findings shall be given due consideration by the municipal civil service commission.

4. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a municipal commission may, for titles designated by it, extend to employees in the service of a civil division who are holding or who have held a position in the non-competitive class of such services pursuant to the provisions of this section, the same opportunity as employees in the competitive class

to take promotion examinations.

5. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a municipal commission shall treat employees appointed pursuant to the provisions of this section, who are holding or who have held a position in the non-competitive class, as if they were employees in the competitive class where, because of economy, consolidation, or abolition of functions, curtailment of activities or otherwise, a number of such positions in either the non-competitive or competitive classes are abolished or reduced in rank or salary grade, suspension or demotion, as further provided in title C of article five of this chapter. For purposes of seniority, the date an employee is appointed pursuant to this section, shall be deemed equivalent to the date a competitive employee is appointed from an eligible list.