



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

William Larkin

## Larkin Proposes Bill To Protect Whistle Blowers

WILLIAM J. LARKIN JR. June 5, 2005

Citing the case in Middletown where a school employee is being fired after turning in the Superintendent of Schools for possessing pornography, Senator Bill Larkin (R-C, Cornwall-on-Hudson) will today introduce legislation in the State Senate to protect public employees who file such reports.

"Clearly, there is a need to expand the kinds of actions that are covered under the current whistle blower statute to include protecting people who uncover information about someone who may be putting children at risk," said Senator Larkin.

Under the current whistle blower statute, only information that "presents a substantial and specific danger to the public health or safety" is covered. Sen. Larkin's bill would expand the scope of the law to include acts that could potentially endanger the welfare of a child, be it physical, mental or sexual abuse.

Further, for the first time, the bill would give the New York State Attorney General and local District Attorney jurisdiction to protect any public employee who turns in evidence relating to suspected child abuse.

Referring to the Middletown case, Senator Larkin said, "Was it just a coincidence that the person who turned in the Superintendent of Schools in Middletown for possessing pornography was the only person in this very large school district slated to lose his job after

this incident occurred? Because of the actions of the school district, we have an entire local community questioning the timing of this 'downsizing' proposal. It takes a very brave and conscientious person to go to the authorities with such a serious accusation. Do we really want people to hesitate when it comes to the safety of our children? This bill would ensure that there could be no retaliation or threat of job loss by a public employer when someone has the courage and conviction to report an incident that could endanger a minor."