



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

William Larkin

Larkin Supports Proposal To Empower Governor Spitzer To Pick Education Commissioner

[WILLIAM J. LARKIN JR.](#) March 8, 2007

Senator Bill Larkin (R-C, Cornwall-on-Hudson) today strongly endorsed a measure by the New York State Senate Majority Conference to empower the Governor to appoint the Commissioner of Education.

The nonpartisan proposal being advanced by the Senate would streamline the process and make it more efficient by empowering the Governor, regardless of political party, to appoint the Education Commissioner. This would allow the current and future Governors to more effectively implement their education policies, initiatives, and budget priorities.

While the Governor currently appoints the heads of other large agencies, such as the Department of Environmental Conservation and the Department of Transportation, the Commissioner of Education is selected by the Board of Regents, which is not directly accountable to voters.

The proposal is similar to the landmark 2002 New York City school governance reform/mayoral control legislation, which continues to produce positive results since it enabled parents throughout the City to hold the Mayor accountable for the direction and performance of their school system.

"Parents, students, administrators and educators have no way of holding the Board of Regents accountable for the way in which the state's Education Department is run or the curriculum that is handed down to our schools," said Senator Larkin. "These invisible board members don't answer to anyone. They are not accountable to the public at all. By empowering the Governor to appoint the Education Commissioner, New Yorkers would have someone to go to who is more directly accountable for the success of the state's public education system."

Upon adoption of this reform, New York would join states such as Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Texas, Virginia, Delaware, Iowa, Minnesota, Tennessee and Maine where the Governor is empowered to select the state's chief education officer.