



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Malcolm Smith

## State Senate Democratic Task Force On Criminal Justice Reform To Host Public Forum On Preventing Wrongful Convictions

MALCOLM A. SMITH April 8, 2008

### *Experts and Exonorees to Testify Regarding Mandatory Recording of Police Interrogations*

On Friday, April 11th, the New York State Senate Democratic Task Force on Criminal Justice Reform will host a public forum at Stony Brook University on proposals to mandate electronic recording of custodial police interrogations. This event will be the first of three forums across the state to address proposed reforms to our criminal justice system to prevent wrongful convictions of the innocent and convict the guilty. During these forums, Legislators and the public will hear testimony from experts and exonerees concerning reform measures that have been proposed in the New York State Legislature or by advocacy groups to help prevent wrongful convictions. Friday's forum will focus on measures to address Mandatory Electronic Recording of Interrogations.

According to proponents of electronic recording of police interrogations, this protocol would save time and money, create undeniable evidence, resolve disputes involving allegations of police misconduct, and verify whether confessions are voluntary—benefits that might have contributed to the timely resolution of the 1990 *People v. Martin Tankleff* case if they had

been in place at the time. The confession obtained during Mr. Tankleff's interrogation by police regarding the murder of his parents was called into question, and after 17 years in prison, his conviction was unanimously overturned by the New York State Appellate Court, 2nd Department in light of new evidence of his innocence. Mr. Tankleff will be present and his representatives are among those scheduled to testify.

**WHO:** Senator Eric Schneiderman, Chair, NYS Senate Democratic Task Force on Criminal Justice Reform Other members of the NYS Legislature

Testimony will be delivered by:

09:30 a.m. **Barry Scheck**, Attorney & Co-Founder of Cardozo Law School's Innocence Project

10:15 a.m. **Nicholas A. Gravante, Jr.**, Attorney, Represented Frank Esposito in People v. Esposito

11:00 a.m. **Martin Tankleff**, whose conviction was unanimously overturned by the New York State Appellate Court, 2nd Department, will be represented by **Lonnie Soury and Eric Friedman**, who led the advocacy effort to free him (Mr. Tankleff will be present in the audience)

12:00 p.m. **Thomas Sullivan**, Attorney & Author of Police Experiences with Recording Custodial Interrogations (2004)

12:45 p.m. **Steve Levy**, Suffolk County Executive (A representative will be testifying on behalf of Mr. Levy)

**WHAT:** Mandatory Electronic Recording of Interrogations

**WHEN:** Friday, April 11, 2008, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. **WHERE:** Stony Brook

University, (Charles B. Wang Center) 100 Nicolls Road, Stony Brook, NY 11794

Testimony will be by invitation only. **The event is open to the public**