



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

William Larkin

## Senator Bill Larkin, Assemblyman Darryl C. Towns, And Illinois Lt. Governor Pat Quinn Join Forces To Call For A Military Family Relief Fund In Ny

WILLIAM J. LARKIN JR. March 6, 2005

Senator Bill Larkin (R-C, Cornwall-on-Hudson) today joined Assemblyman Darryl C. Towns (D-Brooklyn) and Illinois Lieutenant Governor Pat Quinn (D-Chicago) to announce the drive for the creation of the Military Family Relief Fund in New York State.

Senator Larkin, Assemblyman Towns, and Lt. Governor Quinn are advancing legislation (S.444) which would amend New York's personal income tax forms to include a check-off box for individuals and corporations to support the New York Military Family Relief Fund.

Private donations could also be made to the fund at any time.

"I am extremely pleased to join my colleagues here today to call for the establishment of the Military Family Relief Fund in New York State," said Senator Larkin, sponsor of the bill in the Senate. "Many individuals who volunteered for the National Guard did not anticipate that they would be called to serve away from home for twelve, fourteen, or even eighteen months at a time. This situation has created financial hardships for many members of the armed services and their families since soldiers' military pay is often substantially less than what they are earning from their regular jobs. Creating this fund would be a tremendous help to those who are already sacrificing so much in defense of our freedom."

Lt. Governor Pat Quinn is currently leading a national campaign appealing to every state in the country to create such a fund. While Senator Larkin introduced the bill last year, Lt. Governor Quinn contacted Senator Larkin several months ago to help lend support for this effort in New York State. "I am proud to stand in this historic Armory - just miles from Ground Zero - with Senator Bill Larkin and Representative Darryl Towns to lend a helping hand to New York's military families," Quinn said. "For the Empire State to act on this reform is a giant step in the nationwide grassroots movement to create military family relief funds across the land."

Needs-based grants of up to \$2,000 would be awarded to eligible families of Guard and Reserve members.

United States Air Force veteran, Assemblyman Darryl C. Towns said, "Not only are our military families coping with the stress of missing a loved one and worrying about that person's safe return, but many of these families are also struggling to make ends meet. This fund would greatly assist the families of military personnel and give peace of mind to the servicemen and women while they are away. I will continue my efforts to see that this legislation passes the Assembly." Assemblyman Towns is the bill's sponsor in the State Assembly.

Currently, ten other states have enacted the Fund (California, Delaware, Illinois, Kansas, Maine, Michigan, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Vermont and Wyoming). In addition, 21 states have introduced legislation to create their own Military Family Relief Funds.

National Guard members and reservists now comprise a larger percentage of frontline fighting forces than in any war in U.S. history (At least 40 percent in Iraq and 55 percent in Afghanistan). Currently, there are 7,523 National Guard members and reservists on active duty from New York, who leave behind about 9,000 dependents, according to U.S. Defense Department statistics. New York has lost 75 members of the armed services since the War on

Terror began on October 8, 2001.