



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

William Larkin

## Governor To Decide Fate Of Military Family Relief Fund Bill

[WILLIAM J. LARKIN JR.](#) July 25, 2007

Legislation sponsored by Senator Bill Larkin (R-C, Cornwall-on-Hudson) that would create the New York Military Family Relief Fund will soon be sent to Governor Eliot Spitzer for his decision on the fate of the program.

The fund would give financial assistance to the families of New York residents who are members of the national guard, armed services reserves or militia and who have been called to active duty away from their homes for at least 30 days.

Residents should contact the Governor's office at (518) 474-8343 to urge him to sign this bill into law. Bill number S.234 / A.2938.

"Many individuals who volunteered for the national guard or state militia did not anticipate that they would be called to serve for extended periods of time of months or possibly years away from their homes," said Senator Larkin. "This situation has created financial hardships for many members of the armed services and their families since military pay is more often than not substantially less than the amount people receive in civilian pay. This bill creates a way to assist financially struggling military personnel who have been stationed away from home for long periods of time. It also provides monetary grants to those in the military who have sustained physical injury, and grants to the families of those killed."

There is no cost to the state. Revenue for the fund would be generated by checking a "check-off box" on residents' personal income tax forms. Any New Yorker could contribute.

Corporations can do the same. In addition, revenue can be generated from any other private donations. The fund would give grants of up to \$1,000 for servicemembers who have been injured while on active duty and \$5,000 to the families of those killed in action. In addition, families struggling to pay household bills such as rent, car payments and utility bills, for example, while the servicemember is away would be able to obtain needs-based grants of up to \$2,000 annually if the member's military pay is 30% less than their civilian pay.

Senator Larkin proposed the creation of the Military Family Relief Fund in 2004 in a joint effort with Lieutenant Governor Pat Quinn (D-Chicago, Illinois) who has successfully brought the program to Illinois where over 4,300 Illinois military families have received assistance from that state's more than \$2.5 million fund. Fifteen other states have now also successfully created this fund.