



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

William Larkin

Senate Passes Larkin Bill To Create Military Family Relief Fund

[WILLIAM J. LARKIN JR.](#) June 12, 2007

Senator Bill Larkin (R-C, Cornwall-on-Hudson) today announced that the State Senate has passed legislation he sponsored (S.234) to create the New York Military Family Relief Fund which would give financial assistance to the families of servicemembers while they are away on active duty.

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

"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."

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 casualty-based 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 percent less than their civilian pay. Military personnel would be eligible for one or both of the grant programs annually.

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.

In addition to Senator Larkin, twenty-three other senators in the Senate Majority have cosponsored the bill. It was sent to the Assembly.