



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kenneth P. LaValle

Senator LaValle Comments on Governor's Welfare Giveaway

KENNETH P. LAVALLE August 13, 2009

| ISSUE: **SOCIAL SERVICES**



Plan is Irresponsible Use of Federal Stimulus Funds

Senator Kenneth P. LaValle is troubled by the Governor's decision to use \$140 million in federal stimulus dollars to hand out back to school grants to welfare and food stamp recipients. The money will be used to deliver grants of \$200 per child with no strings attached. Families will not be restricted on how they can spend the money nor is it required that their child or children be enrolled in a school program.

"I believe this is a totally irresponsible use of federal stimulus funds and is a plan that is ripe for fraud and abuse," said Senator LaValle. "The Governor should be using stimulus dollars to restore the STAR property tax rebates that he and the Senate Democrats eliminated."

According to Senator LaValle, the intended use of federal stimulus funds was to create jobs and reduce taxes. The Governor's welfare giveaway comes in addition to a 10 percent increase in the basic welfare grant that was part of his budget. The free money will be given out regardless of whether a welfare recipient has complied with work or other requirements, or whether a child is enrolled, attending, or even dropped out of school. The grants will be made available at ATMs and families are not required to use the money for back to school supplies. There are no restrictions, there is no accountability, and there is no legislative oversight attached to this welfare giveaway.

"A decade ago, we enacted laws to ensure accountability in our social services programs, cut back on welfare fraud and abuse, and encourage personal and parental responsibility," said Senator LaValle. "The Governor's plan takes a big step backwards and is a questionable public assistance program implemented at a time when we are facing a \$2.1 billion budget deficit. This administration needs to focus on the needs of the middle class taxpayers who will bear the cost of such programs in addition to the new taxes and fees imposed through the Governor's budget."