



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George D. Maziarz

Senator Maziarz supports efforts to crack down on pension padding

GEORGE D. MAZIARZ April 1, 2010

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Senator George Maziarz (R-C, Newfane) today enthusiastically endorsed New York State Attorney General Andrew Cuomo's efforts to investigate pension padding in both state and local governments across New York. This morning Senator Maziarz joined Attorney General Cuomo at a press conference at the University at Buffalo Law School to highlight recent expansions in the investigation.

"When public employees inflate their pensions by accruing an unusually high amount of overtime in their final working years, they are playing a dangerous and costly game," Senator Maziarz said. "Manipulating the system for personal gain, at the taxpayer's expense, is an outright betrayal of the public trust. The attorney general is absolutely right to be going after these abuses. It's not only unethical, it's adding to the heavy tax burden that drives businesses and jobs away."

Today Attorney General Cuomo said, "My office will continue our efforts to ensure that our pension system, which controls \$130 billion and serves more than 1 million people across the state, is efficient and waste-free."

Pension levels for most public employees are determined by the average salary earned during the final three years of employment. Overtime and other benefits are often accrued during this time frame so that pension benefits are "padded" at a higher-than-normal level. In some egregious instances, employees' pensions have been higher than their actual final salary due to these add-ins. Benefits are paid out at that level for the rest of the retiree's life.

"The burdens and pressures facing taxpayers are greater than they've ever been," Senator Maziarz said.

"Investigating some of these pension padding cases to determine the extent of fraud and abuse is in the taxpayers' best interest because we, the public, are footing the bill."

According to Attorney General Cuomo, if merely one percent of pension costs are improperly inflated, eliminating those practices could save taxpayers close to \$500 million over twenty years.

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