



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

William T. Stachowski

Stachowski & Senate Task Force Target Dot Suspicious Overtime

WILLIAM T. STACHOWSKI May 5, 2010

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STACHOWSKI & SENATE TASK FORCE TARGET DOT SUSPICIOUS OVERTIME

Task Force Tipped Off On Whistleblower Website; Probes Officials on Wasteful Spending

Along with his colleagues on the Senate's Task Force on Government Efficiency, Senator William T. Stachowski (D, Lake View) today unveiled a recent tip submitted to the Task Force whistleblower website regarding suspicious overtime pay at the New York State Department of Transportation (DOT). The Task Force then immediately held a public forum to probe DOT officials on this issue and other potential findings of excessive spending.

Late last month, the Task Force released the third in its series of investigative reports, this one citing \$60 million dollars in potential cost-savings at the NYS Department of Transportation, and more than \$200 million in funds the Department has already wasted. Following the release of the report, the Task Force received an anonymous tip on its whistleblower website that DOT's motor vehicle inspectors, 7 of whom fall into the top 10 overtime earners overall at the Department, may be inspecting vehicles not required to be inspected under NYS transportation law.

“Under no circumstances should New York taxpayers be footing the bill for these kinds of unwarranted expenses at the state level,” said Senator Stachowski, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Economic Development and Small Business. “I am pleased to see that conscientious New Yorkers are already taking full advantage of our whistleblower website and joining our fight to cut government waste.”

At the hearing, the Task Force heard testimony from DOT Acting Commissioner Stanley Gee; Tom Comanzo, Vice President of the Public Employees Federation (PEF); and Jay Simson, Executive Director of American Council on Engineering Companies.

In its latest report, the Task Force uncovered close to \$60 million in potential cost-saving measures at DOT, ranging from moving some of its contracted services in-house (\$46.5 million) to speeding up its typical contract close-out time frame (\$10 million) to decreasing overtime spending (\$3.5 million) or cutting back on night work (\$360,000).

The Task Force report also outlined more than \$210 million in wasted funds that have already been spent, including \$150 million on contract management and further rising contract costs associated with changes in DOT specifications. In 2006, DOT revised its specifications for the type of reflective sheeting used on orange construction signs, requiring full compliance by January 2009. Although DOT claimed this change would come at no cost to the state, contractors statewide had to pay nearly \$27 million to replace the 2.7 million existing signs, a cost they are now passing onto the state in the form of higher contract prices.

In an effort to stem further wasteful spending and mismanagement of taxpayer dollars at state agencies, last month the Senate Task Force announced the launch of a new webpage where state employees and other interested New Yorkers can anonymously submit their ideas, suggestions and feedback on how the state can conserve resources in this tough fiscal time, as well as report any suspected wasteful government spending or abuse of tax dollars. This page is accessible via the Task Force's Senate website:

<http://www.nysenate.gov/committee/task-force-government-efficiency>.

The Senate Task Force on Government Efficiency was created with the goal of uncovering inefficient government spending and developing productive solutions to put taxpayer dollars to better use. It is a bipartisan Task Force comprised of Senators William Stachowski, Jeff Klein, Darrel Aubertine, Brian X. Foley, Craig Johnson, Betty Little, George Maziarz, Tom Morahan, Jose Peralta, Diane Savino, Jose Serrano, Andrea Stewart-Cousins, and David Valesky.