



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## RITCHIE MEASURE WOULD HELP INJURED WORKERS SAVE TIME, MONEY BY USING VIDEO CONFERENCING TO PARTICIPATE IN WORKERS' COMP PROCEEDINGS

PATTY RITCHIE June 6, 2016

State Senator Patty Ritchie has announced her legislation to relieve injured workers in St. Lawrence County from having to travel long distances to participate in Workers' Compensation proceedings has passed the State Senate.

Prompted by the 2013 closure of the Workers' Compensation Board hearing center in Canton, which forced injured workers to travel to Watertown or Saranac Lake for hearings and other proceedings, under Senator Ritchie's measure (S.6225), claimants and their representatives would be able to participate via video conference.

"St. Lawrence County is the largest geographic county in New York State and in 2013 when the hearing center in Canton closed, it created a hardship for injured employees, forcing them to travel in some instances over an hour to attend hearings," said Senator Ritchie.

"By making video conferencing an option, we're using already existing technology to eliminate the need to drive long distances to proceedings and helping claimants and their representatives save both time and money."

Legislation passed today would authorize the Workers' Compensation Board to utilize any forum where video conferencing is available, and open to the public in St. Lawrence County to broadcast proceedings and hearings.

Video conferencing is already utilized by out-of-state or remotely located claimants or health care providers. In addition, desktop video technology is being used on a pilot basis for conducting proceedings with self-insured employers or insurance carriers who may have a number of cases pending before the Workers' Compensation Board.