



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

William Larkin

Senate Unanimously Passes Larkin Bill Allowing Police To Keep Equipment Seized From Criminals

William J. Larkin Jr.

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Senator Bill Larkin (R-C, Cornwall-on-Hudson) today announced the State Senate has passed legislation (S.201) he has sponsored every year since 1998 that would allow law enforcement officials to retain electronic devices and surveillance equipment that has been seized from convicted criminals. The measure would allow the police to use them for law enforcement purposes.

The bill unanimously passed the Senate by a vote of 58-0. It has been passed by the Senate every year since 1998. However, it has never been released from committee in the Assembly.

"Under current law, police departments can keep any vehicle, vessel or aircraft they seize from criminals and use those things for law enforcement purposes," said Senator Larkin. "This policy has proven very successful. It takes these illegally obtained items out of the hands of criminals and, at the same time, saves taxpayers a great deal of money when cities, towns and villages don't have to purchase these

expensive items."

Larkin continued, "Law enforcement agencies also frequently seize other items from criminals. Most commonly is electronic equipment. Computers, video equipment and fax machines, and surveillance equipment such as night vision goggles are often confiscated. In most cases, this kind of sophisticated equipment is superior to the technology used by police agencies.

"Unfortunately, under current law, such valuable equipment cannot be forfeited to the police. Instead, it must be auctioned off. But, the auction process is slow and costly, and produces only a fraction of the value of the goods, even when the electronic equipment is in excellent condition. This bill would allow the police to keep the electronic equipment they seize from law breakers and use it to combat crime."

The bill remains in the Assembly Codes Committee.