



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

William Larkin

Larkin Wants To Increase Penalties For Desecration Of Veterans' Cemeteries

[WILLIAM J. LARKIN JR.](#) June 5, 2005

Senator Bill Larkin (R-C, Cornwall-on-Hudson) today announced that legislation he sponsored to protect veterans' cemeteries has passed the State Senate.

The bill (S.2348) creates two new crimes for the desecration of a veteran cemetery plot, grave or burial place. It also prohibits the unauthorized sale of veteran commemorative cemetery markers, flag holders, monuments, statues or other physical memorabilia that are over 75 years old by cemeteries if those items are currently located within a cemetery.

"Lately, there has been a growing and disturbing trend with the theft and desecration of veterans' cemeteries," said Senator Larkin. "This legislation addresses a problem that was first brought to my attention by the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, Department of New York. There are certain individuals who are taking advantage of the fact that Civil War artifacts like cemetery markers, statues and monuments have become particularly valuable. There have been recent cases where these valuable items have actually been removed from the cemeteries and sold by cemetery corporations."

Civil War veteran groups maintain that many of these Civil War monuments erected in cemeteries were donated by veteran groups after the civil war and are, in equitable terms, the property of the veteran's groups and the communities in which they are situated.

Larkin agrees that these Civil War monuments should remain where they were placed to help commemorate the sacrifices made by Civil War veterans, "We need this law to help preserve the memory of America's early freedom fighters. The statues, gravestones, monuments and other personal property belong only with them. These items are sacred because they help memorialize the life and death of these special veterans."

The bill now goes to the Assembly.