



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kenneth P. LaValle

LaValle Outraged at Latest Taxpayer Abuse, To Introduce Legislation to Mitigate Actions by Outgoing School Boards.

KENNETH P. LAVALLE July 5, 2011

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New York State Senator Kenneth P. LaValle (R,C,I – Port Jefferson) said today the abuse of taxpayers by two outgoing school boards has prompted him to introduce legislation that would require a lame duck school board to have a supermajority vote in order to approve a contract for a new superintendent when the hiring occurs between the annual May vote and the annual reorganizational meeting of a local school board. Assemblyman Dan Losquadro (R,C -Shoreham) will sponsor the legislation in the Assembly.

“My legislation,” Senator LaValle said, “will prevent these outrageous and unconscionable abuses of taxpayer dollars by requiring a supermajority vote by a board hoping to quickly push through the hiring of a school superintendent.”

LaValle cited two boards’ actions for the proposed new law.

Just last month, LaValle said, Wyandanch's outgoing school-board majority pushed through a new, three-year, \$570,000 pay package for its superintendent. The measure passed on a 4-3 vote. The three board members who form part of the new board’s majority voted no.

And in Shoreham, a lame-duck board hired new superintendent Dr. Steven Cohen and awarded him a 4- year, \$210,000 per year contract with no input from a new incoming board. And with only three hours left in their term, the outgoing board entered into a per diem fee arrangement to pay Cohen an additional \$1,240 per day for a 10-day “transition period.”

Clearly,” Senator LaValle said, “by accepting an eleventh-hour appointment and then padding it with a per diem arrangement, Dr. Cohen never took a course in community relations. Shoreham and Wyandanch have made the case for this new legislation as well as underscoring the need for the property tax cap. No one locally is protecting the taxpayer.”

“The actions by the Wyandanch and Shoreham-Wading River outgoing school board majorities clearly make the case for why the tax cap we put in place is needed” said Assemblyman Losquadro. “With school district costs accounting for 65-75% of the average tax bill, the public has a perception that their school boards are doing little to rein in costs. While this is not the case for most districts, these two schools boards reinforce the public’s worst fears of backroom sweetheart deals that cost us all on our taxes.”