

# NEWS RENSSELAER COUNTY LEGISLATURE

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### HARRINGTON: FUND SHERIFF OT

Members of the Democratic Minority of the Rensselaer County Legislature are concerned that the animosity between the Republican Majority and the County Sheriff may threaten public safety.

In a statement released after the March meeting of the County Legislature, Kevin Harrington, a member of the Public Safety and Judiciary Committee, said, "We are very concerned that a resolution to fund overtime for Sheriff's deputies was withdrawn at the last moment, without explanation by the Legislative Majority."

A resolution to amend the Sheriff's budget by taking \$25,000 from its special medical account to cover overtime, already incurred by deputies from February 9<sup>th</sup> and through March 23,<sup>rd</sup> passed through three committees. It was on the Legislative agenda, until a Special Rules Committee meeting, called moments before the Legislature went into session. A resolution to purchase a vehicle for the department met a similar fate. Majority Republicans completely wiped out the Sheriff's overtime budget in their 2007 budget plan, considered by the Minority to be "completely unrealistic and unreasonable."

"It is our duty to equip our law enforcement officers with the tools to protect and preserve the citizens of Rensselaer County. There are currently no funds in the overtime code for deputy sheriffs. What does that mean when deputies are on a case and their shift ends? Are they to say to an accident victim, 'Sorry I have to leave you here because my shift is over?'"

"I commend the Sheriff and his deputies for working under these conditions. We need to give them enough money to do their jobs which, by necessity, includes some overtime funding."

Harrington is urging the Sheriff to turn over documents that will provide a realistic future cost projection, so "we can move forward to assure public safety as well as cost efficiencies."