

NEWS RENSSELAER COUNTY LEGISLATURE

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By Kevin Harrington 330-9114

HARRINGTON SAYS DA'S HANDLING OF 911 WHISTELBLOWER SHAMEFUL *Calls For Appointment of A Special District Attorney*

Rensselaer County Legislator Kevin Harrington expressed "profound disappointment" after learning that the District Attorney closed her investigation of potential criminal conduct in the agency without hearing the sworn testimony of the principle accuser, an employee of 911.

"It is incomprehensible that the DA would demand that a whistle blower sign away his immunity from prosecution before testifying before a grand jury. A cooperating witness is normally encouraged to testify and, under state law, has automatic immunity," stated Harrington, a member of the Legislature's Public Safety & Judiciary Committee.

"In order to obtain that testimony so the grand jury could weigh its credibility, it is essential that no impediments be placed in front of the witness that would discourage sworn testimony," stated Harrington. "In this case, the action of the DA was designed to ensure that the grand jury did not have an opportunity to hear that sworn testimony of the whistle blower---effectively stonewalling the investigation."

"I can only conclude that the DA did this deliberately and has no intention of allowing potentially damaging sworn testimony to be heard by the grand jury. I, therefore, believe that a special District Attorney should be impaneled to review this case and permit the testimony of the whistle blower with the same procedural immunity of any grand jury witness. Once given, let the grand jury weigh the credibility of the testimony and act according."

"This is a sad chapter in the shameful story our DA's office. To call this charade the equivalent of a 'Public Integrity Unit' is a travesty of justice," concluded Harrington.