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Taxpayers Against Fraud Chairman Hails Enactment of NY False Claims Act

Neil Getnick, Chairman of Taxpayers Against Fraud (TAF), a non profit group committed to fighting fraud and abuse of government funds, praised New York's enactment of landmark legislation authorizing whistleblower suits to recoup taxpayer dollars when the State is defrauded. These suits are vital to curb fraud in New York's \$47 billion Medicaid program.

"New York State has the largest Medicaid budget in the country, far surpassing California, Texas, Florida, and Massachusetts," said Getnick.

"Yet while those states have long since enacted False Claims Acts, New York lagged behind. Now, New York vaults to the forefront in fighting fraud."

Getnick praised Governor Spitzer for making the law a budget priority, and Attorney General Andrew Cuomo, for his forceful advocacy. "From his first days as Attorney General, Governor Spitzer immediately recognized the vital role of whistleblower suits in protecting the public purse," Getnick said. "Governor Spitzer, and Attorney General Andrew Cuomo, fought to ensure that New York has a law that allows watchdogs to take a bite out of the hides of crooks who fleece our citizens."

The new law was drafted to comply with the Federal Deficit Reduction Act enabling states that enact a qualifying False Claims Act to retain a larger portion of their Medicaid fraud recoveries (effectively 20% in New York). "New York is the first state to pass a False Claims Act since the Federal DRA, and the impetus of that action may trigger other states across the nation to follow suit in order to reap similar benefits," said Getnick.

The new law permits whistleblower suits against anyone who cheats New York - whether they are crooked health care providers, construction contractors or school vendors, as well as other unscrupulous vendors of goods or services. The law rewards whistleblowers with up to 30% of the proceeds of the recovery. "We expect this new law will return hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars to the public purse every year and reward honest citizens," Getnick said, "as well as help hold down skyrocketing real property taxes."

In addition to being Chairman of Taxpayers Against Fraud, Getnick is the managing partner of Getnick & Getnick, a Manhattan-based law firm, recognized nationally as a leader in Federal false claims act litigation, with over \$400 million in recoveries. "We will go after those who cheat New York State with the same tenacity and determination that we used to recover stolen Federal dollars," Getnick vowed.