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COMPTROLLER CELEBRATES LAW WITH WHISTLES Ulster Legislature Enacts Whistleblower Protections

KINGSTON, NY (September 9, 2009)... A grateful Comptroller Auerbach handed out symbolic whistles to Ulster legislators at Wednesday's meeting of the County Legislature. Legislators had just voted in favor of a policy that protects employees and agents of the County from retaliation for 'blowing the whistle' on fraud and abuse in County government.

"The Legislature's action tonight empowers a great many people to challenge improper or unlawful conduct in County government," said Comptroller Elliott Auerbach, "tonight 'we blow the whistle' in recognition of this important policy."

"It was great to see Legislators rally around this important protection," said Auerbach, "they made a Herculean effort across several committees and two caucuses to effect this policy."

Auerbach first identified the need for County whistleblower protections in his March 25, 2009 "Internal Control Baseline Report" which assessed the effectiveness of internal controls within County departments. The report recommended whistleblower protection to protect individuals from retaliation if they report misconduct.

"We have seen a number of instances this year where if people felt assured they would not suffer retaliation for speaking up," explained Auerbach, "problems may have been resolved or mitigated without the time, expense and disruptions caused by lawsuits. The Legislature's leadership tonight contributes to improving internal control structure of Ulster County Government."

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