

POLITICS

State Controller Thomas DiNapoli to add anti-corruption division to office

DiNapoli plans to announce Monday the creation of an investigations division amid a number of investigative efforts by upstate and downstate U.S. attorneys. DiNapoli told the Daily News the new division would improve the oversight of public funds.

BY KENNETH LOVETT / DAILY NEWS ALBANY BUREAU CHIEF / Monday, May 12, 2014, 2:30 AM

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State Controller Thomas DiNapoli is to announce the creation of an investigations division in his office on Monday.

ALBANY — State Controller Thomas DiNapoli is beefing up the anti-corruption efforts of his office.

DiNapoli on Monday will announce the creation of an investigations division in his office.

The announcement comes amid a number of investigations by upstate and downstate U.S. attorneys and in the wake of Gov. Cuomo pulling the plug on his anti-corruption commission after the Legislature agreed to an ethics reform package in March.

"It fortifies within our organization the importance of the investigative work that we do," DiNapoli told the Daily News.

There are plans to hire an additional four investigators for the division.

Nelson Sheingold, who has served since 2011 as legal counsel for investigations, will be given a deputy controller title to head up the effort. Sheingold, who makes \$150,000 a year, is a former state Inspector General chief counsel, assistant attorney general, and assistant Manhattan district attorney.

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"Time after time my auditors and investigators have uncovered fraud by government officials, employees and vendors," DiNapoli said. "This new division will boost our scrutiny and strengthen the oversight of public funds."



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DiNapoli has a formal agreement with State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman (pictured) that allows the attorney general's office to conduct criminal investigations into state wrongdoing.

DiNapoli's auditors frequently work with federal and state prosecutors, resulting in 30 arrests and the restitution of \$3 million last year.

DiNapoli and Attorney General Eric Schneiderman have a formal arrangement that allows the attorney general's office to conduct criminal investigations into state wrongdoing as long as cases are referred by the controller's office.

His office worked with Schneiderman as part of an investigation that resulted in the arrest last week of City Councilman Ruben Wills (D-Queens) on charges he misspent state funds earmarked for his non-profit.

The arrangements also led to the arrests and convictions of former state Sen. Shirley Huntley, who pocketed money meant for a non-profit she created, and William Rapfogel, the former head of the Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty, who engaged in a two-decade \$9 million kickback scheme.

"We're still finding too many instances of people ripping off public resources," DiNapoli said.

DiNapoli, who was appointed controller in early 2007 after Alan Hevesi resigned in scandal, is seeking election this year to a second full term. He is being challenged by Republican Onondaga County Controller Robert Antonacci.

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