

Press Releases

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SPITZER MARKS FIRST 100 DAYS IN OFFICE

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A.G. Lauded For Quality Of Hires, Early Activism

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Independent legal experts are lauding Attorney General Eliot Spitzer's first 100 days in office, saying it's been marked by outstanding legal hires and a period of aggressive activism in the areas of law enforcement, public safety and consumer protection. April 10th marked Spitzer's 100th day in office.

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During his campaign last year, Spitzer promised that through his non-partisan hiring practices and emphasis on public interest lawyering, he would return the office to the respect it had enjoyed under previous Attorneys General.

Among Spitzer's first 30 legal hires are three former U.S. Supreme Court clerks, the former Executive Director of the N.Y. State Ethics Commission, a pioneer in the development of the Peace Corps, and the former Senior Attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council. Of his cabinet-level hires, all have degrees from the nation's top-tier law schools.

In response to the appointments, retired Court of Appeals Judge Stewart Hancock said, "The Attorney General has succeeded in assembling an exceptionally well qualified and experienced legal staff.

"From the academic achievements at top ranked law schools of many of the appointees and the prior positions of some as clerks to United States Supreme Court Justices and as Assistant U.S. Attorneys, one must conclude that this is a distinguished staff which will serve the People very well."

James Moore, the President of the State Bar Association, said: "I was pleased to note that the individuals selected by Attorney General Spitzer to fill his office's senior positions all appear to have two important characteristics: strong records of academic achievement and extensive specialized experience."

During his first months in office, Spitzer has taken a number of steps to build respect for the law, protect consumers, and increase public confidence in government. These actions include:

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- Creating the nation's first Reproductive Rights Unit, which will enforce existing clinic access laws and ensure that women have access to reproductive services. The unit is currently involved in expanding the buffer zones around clinics in anticipation of protests in the Rochester and Buffalo areas later this month;
- Establishing an Internet Bureau to address online stock trading, Internet commerce, child pornography and privacy issues. New York becomes the second state in the country to establish such a Bureau;
- Developing a Public Integrity Unit to investigate allegations of wrongdoing and corruption by those in public office across the state;
- Launching a major civil rights investigation into the "stop and frisk" practices of the New York City Police Department;
- Proposing new legislation (Kendra's Law) to ensure that the mentally ill take their prescribed medication. The measure followed a mentally-disturbed man allegedly pushing a woman to her death in front of a subway train.
- Initiating a statewide campaign to prevent delays in emergency medical treatment and to enforce the state's Managed Care Consumer Bill of Rights; and
- Leading a multi-state probe to clean up the boxing industry.

Betsy Plevan, the former President of the Federal Bar Council said, "It is clear by his early initiatives that the Attorney General has set a course for aggressive and vigilant work in protecting both the public's safety and consumer rights. His initial activity bodes well for the public to be served by an active and energetic A.G. who will have a broad-based presence throughout the state over the next four years."

"When taking my oath," said Spitzer, "I said that the Attorney General's office should not be a Republican office or a Democratic office, but the people's office, the people's law firm. Thanks to the quality of people we've been able to attract, I am convinced that we are well on our way toward assembling the finest public interest law firm in the nation.

"Over the next four years our mission will be to vigorously enforce the laws of the state, protect consumers, and safeguard the environment.

"From public safety concerns in Buffalo, to environmental problems on Long Island and every community in between, I want the people of New York to know that our office, the people's law office, will be here to help and protect them."
