

## 3 NY EMPLOYEES GET PINK SLIPS LIFTED



If you follow our coverage here regularly, then you know about the massive layoffs that may happen to civil servants in the state of New York. While many of the states workers, and their union, are trying to prevent the job losses by negotiating a new contract before the new November 4th deadline, there are at least three civil servants who are relieved to find out that they will not be losing their jobs in the near future, whether the layoffs go on as planned or not. These lucky workers have a very serious job. The three workers who had their pink slips reversed were the three psychologists who have the duty to keep vicious sexual predators locked up in mental health facilities when their prison terms have ended. The official jobs title is a mental health psychiatric examiner. For those of you not familiar with the position, and most people outside of the criminal justice system are not, a mental health psychiatric examiner job is to evaluate violent sex offenders, and other serious offender. They then provide expert testimony to judges and juries to decide whether or not to keep those offenders in jail, or let them go free. This expert testimony is often a serious factor in final decision. Three of the twelve hired by the state were slated to be laid off with a large number of others who were employed by the State of New York. While three psychiatric examiners may not sound like a big concern compared to the thousands of jobs that could be lost, but it would represent a loss of 25% of the department. The three jobs were listed on the a layoff list released by the governors office on Oct. 6. The questions about letting go these three employees were originally raised by a reporter for the Daily News. What would the effect of the layoffs of these three employees be, if their pink slips had not been rescinded? Well, for one thing all of the cases that they had been working on would have been short an expert witness. That would have left lawyers for the state in search of a new witness, potentially delayed trials or even meant that these violent offenders could have been set free. The lack of examiners would have also meant that employees would have had a backlog of cases. That backlog would have also allowed violent offenders to go free. Under the terms of a 2007 civil confinement law who are getting ready to leave prison have to be evaluated by a state employed psychiatrist or psychologist before they can leave. Based on those recommendations the attorney general's office may seek a civil confinement order. Currently, under the terms of this law 200 sex offenders have been placed into mental institutions and another 105 convicted sex offenders are currently awaiting review. So, while the fates of these three employees have been changed, the fate of the rest of the 3,496 civil servants who are slated to be laid off hangs in the balance. It all comes down to how much the members of the Public Employees Federation are willing to give up in order to keep their colleagues at their desks. A decision must be made by November 4th, the new extension date, or the layoffs will go on as planned.