Assembly Republicans Demand Federal Investigation Into Silver

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The New York Times reported yesterday that a group of Assembly Republicans headed have called
on federal prosecutors to investigate the "scandalous and allegedly criminal enterprises conducted by the Speaker of the Assembly, Sheldon Silver, and his staff."

The group wants an investigation into Silver's handling of sexual harassment cases over the years, including allegations against former Assemblyman Vito Lopez.

The letter, addressed to U.S. Attorney Richard S. Hartunian of the Northern District, alleges: "Silver's chief legal counsel and his deputy legal counsel violated the state's sexual harassment policy by refusing to follow the mandatory reporting requirements with the Assembly Ethics Committee even though Silver and his staff originally drafted this compulsory rule."

A spokesman for Silver didn't immediately respond to a request for comment from the Gotham Gazette.

If Hartunian were to investigate, he wouldn't be the only U.S. attorney looking into Albany scandal. Preet Bharara, of the Southern District of New York, has more than a few Albany legislators running scared.

The letter comes as a Quinnipiac University poll finds that 51 percent of voters think Silver should step down.

Silver has apologized for his role in the Vito Lopez sexual harassment settlement and investigation but has dismissed calls for his resignation. Silver reached a secret financial

settlement with two female staffers who made sexual-harassment complaints against Lopez last year. Two more women came forward later with similar complaints and eventually the Joint Commission on Public Ethics looked into the Lopez matter but not into Silver's handling of the case. The situations has shined a spotlight on Albany's culture of sexual harassment .

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