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Story**State pulls a fa\$t one**

By ERIK KRISS

Last Updated: 2:53 AM, February 13, 2013

Posted: 2:03 AM, February 13, 2013

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ALBANY — The state is diverting \$8.5 million a year in speeding-ticket fees meant to fund spinal-cord research and using the money to balance the budget, The Post has learned.

The money comes from a surcharge on speeding tickets that was imposed in 1998 to create and finance the Spinal Cord Injury Research Trust Fund. But since 2010, the money has gone into the state's general fund to pay its bills.

Supporters of paralysis research, who are planning to hold an event in Albany today to highlight the budget grab, say more than \$70 million went into cutting-edge research from 1998 through 2009.

They say 23 other states passed legislation similar to the bill shepherded through the New York Legislature by retired State Police Sgt. Paul Richter, who was paralyzed from the neck down while making a traffic stop in upstate Lake Placid in 1973.

State Budget Division spokesman Morris Peters noted the decision to redirect the surcharge proceeds to the general fund was made before Gov. Cuomo took office on Jan. 1, 2011.