



New York State Correctional Officers & Police Benevolent Association, Inc.

102 Hackett Blvd., Albany, NY 12209
(518) 427-1551 www.nyscopba.org nyscopba@nyscopba.org



President
Donn Rowe

Executive Vice
President
Chris Hickey

Recording Secretary
Diane Davis

Treasurer
John Telisky

Vice President,
Northern Region
Randy Page

Vice President,
Mid-Hudson Region
Kevin Walker

Vice President,
Law Enforcement
Jerry Dewitt

Vice President,
Central Region
Tom Haas

Vice President,
Western Region
Al Mothershed

Vice President,
Southern Region
Willie Perez

For Immediate Release: December 16, 2008

Contact: Donn Rowe – President (drowe@nyscopba.org) 518-427-1551

NYSCOPBA PRESIDENT ROWE CONDEMNS SHORTSIGHTED DOCS SCHEME

New York State Correctional Officers & Police Benevolent Association President Donn Rowe today denounced the Department of Corrections plan to give NYSCOPBA members and impacted facilities a mere 90-days notice to close facilities.

“The Departments of Corrections continued obsession with what they call ‘excess capacity’ yet again yields a cut security first philosophy that puts our members and the public at risk,” Rowe said. “DOCS doesn’t like to talk about the fact that maximum security facilities are at 124 percent capacity; medium security facilities operate at approximately 101 percent capacity. We have scenarios where one CO is responsible for supervising 60 inmates, talk to the people on the front lines about ‘excess capacity.’”

“New York faces a serious fiscal crisis, we need serious solutions. DOCS need to take a more comprehensive, system wide approach. DOCS refusal to look at their own bloated administration, and continuing to focus only on security, is reckless and irresponsible.” Rowe continued.

According to President Rowe, DOCS consistently puts out misleading information about capacity levels at state prisons. To set the record straight, Rowe pointed out the following facts:

- Although the inmate population has decreased from 130 percent capacity to 105 percent capacity over the past 9 years, DOCS has misled New Yorkers to try to make them believe empty cells and empty facilities are common place.
- DOCS likes to talk about an inmate to CO ratio of 3 to 1. That would be accurate if every one of our members was on the job 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The actual ratio is 60 to 1.
- There are more than 4,000 inmates who are “double-bunked.” A practice that forces two inmates to live in a cell or dorm cubical designed for one person. This practice presents a serious security threat to both Correctional Officers and inmates.

“DOCS has made a habit of haphazardly picking facilities for closure. In order for the right decisions to be made in these difficult financial times, DOCS should work with NYSCOPBA, potentially impacted local communities, and the State Legislature to make sure we make smart decisions that impact the entire prison system, as well as public safety.” Rowe said.

“New Yorkers need to ask why the Department of Corrections refuses to alleviate a dangerous, pressure-filled situation. By eliminating “double-bunks” and assign inmates to other facilities, safety will increase.” Rowe said. “Our members respect the fact that state leaders face trying fiscal times and many difficult decisions in the upcoming 2009 session, but we remain committed to our members and the communities they work and live in. We should all be concerned when a plan that impacts thousands of lives and the public safety of all New Yorkers is drawn in secret back rooms and announced via press release.”

###