

**NYSCOPBA BLASTS GOVERNOR'S PROPOSAL TO LAYOFF
4,500 CORRECTIONS AND MENTAL HEALTH EMPLOYEES;
MEASURE ENDANGERS THE LIVES OF WORKERS AND THE
SAFETY OF ALL NEW YORKERS**

ALBANY, NY— Today, New York State Correctional Officers & Police Benevolent Association (NYSCOPBA) President Donn Rowe condemned Governor Paterson's proposed 2,012-person cut to the Correctional Services Agency, 1,434-person cut at the Office of Mental Retardation, and 1,054 person-cut to Mental Health.

"Just days ago, the Governor himself acknowledged what every New Yorker already knows: any reductions in the State workforce should not jeopardize public safety. Less than 48 hours later, the Governor is proposing layoffs that fall squarely on the men and woman who guard our prisons, care for our sick, and keep our communities safe," said Rowe

In a letter issued to State employees Tuesday, the Governor explicitly stressed the importance of "protecting the health and safety of our citizens" in the midst of the 8,700 person layoff his office ordered last month:

"Today, I have directed each agency commissioner to develop a workforce reduction plan for their agency. These plans are to be implemented by July 1. In developing their Workforce Reduction Plans, I have asked agency commissioners to find ways to achieve the necessary savings while protecting the health and safety of our citizens."

Just hours later, in the dead of night, a list of agency-by-agency cuts were released, including a disproportional 2,021 person cut to Correctional Services, 1,434-person cut at the Office of Mental Retardation, and 1,054 person-cut to Mental Health —three agencies explicitly charged with the duty of "protecting the health and safety of our citizens".

"This is hypocrisy at an all-time high—even for this Governor," said Rowe. "The Administration has charged the Agency Commissioner with the job of making these cuts without negatively impacting public safety—a task we do not have confidence he can properly accomplish. This move will threaten public safety and mean disproportional layoffs for upstate communities that are already facing tough economic times."

These proposed layoffs come on the heels of last week's state budget that included the closure of three upstate prisons.

"The New York State Department of Correctional Services itself issued a report acknowledging that our prisons are operating at 104% capacity," said Rowe. "Despite this fact, the legislature ordered the closure of three prisons in this year's budget—a move that will cause further overcrowding, endangering the lives of corrections officers and increasing the risk of inmate violence. Today, less than a week later, the Governor is proposing layoffs that will compromise the public's safety even further."

NYSCOPBA has repeatedly called on the Governor to achieve savings by reducing the number of managerial employees at the Department of Corrections, and other top-heavy state agencies. Currently, there are over nine hundred administrator's working at Agency Building Two, many of whom make well over one hundred thousand dollars per year, not including the layer upon layer of administrators that work at each of the seventy prisons across New York.

“Our members work in some of the most dangerous and stressful conditions imaginable and in return all we ask is that we work in a safe and secure environment,” continued President Rowe. “Yet, when it comes time to make cuts, the Governor turns to those on the front line, proposing we guard more inmates, and care for more patients with less staff. Endangering the safety of our members and the public at large is not something to compromise.”

New York State Correctional Officers and Police Benevolent Association (NYSCOPBA), Inc. is the Union representing over 23,000 New York State Employees in the Security Services sector. NYSCOPBA members do some of the toughest work there is, so that all of us stay safe.

To learn more about NYSCOPBA, please visit www.nyscopba.org