



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

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



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May 19, 2009

Commissioner Diana Jones Ritter
NYS Office of Mental Retardation and
Developmental Disabilities
44 Holland Avenue
Albany, NY 12229-0001

Dear Commissioner Ritter:

Last week, representatives from your office met with representatives of the New York State Correctional Officers and Police Benevolent Association, Inc. (NYSCOPBA) to discuss the New York State Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD) timeline regarding the reduction of workforce for the 2009-2010 budget year. As you know, Safety and Security Officer (SSO)1s and SSO2s serve many vital functions, including, but not limited to, patrolling assigned areas, inspecting state buildings, grounds and equipment, detecting irregularities and deterring criminal activity, summoning medical assistance for the emergency care of ill and injured people, assisting in calming, containing and controlling agitated parties and individuals with disabilities to prevent harm to themselves, others and property, directing evacuations to prevent injury, directing and processing visitors, providing escorts, reporting missing and disoriented patients, preparing written reports regarding environmental health and safety issues, security activities and incidents, participating in various investigations, transportation of patients and disabled individuals to treatment facilities, directing traffic to prevent dangerous situations, enforcing traffic laws and regulations, reporting safety and security concerns, coordinating disaster preparedness and emergency management planning with Chief SSOs and assisting in the development of departmental manuals and hospital-wide fire/safety/disaster manuals.

After hearing the specifics of the meeting, I have serious concerns about the proposed reductions. I am not only concerned about the safety of NYSCOPBA'S members, but also about the safety and well-being of the consumers at OMRDD facilities. Specifically, I have not been informed of any plan that OMRDD may have regarding what personnel would perform the

numerous and necessary functions at the various facilities if SSO positions are eliminated. For example, at Central New York DDSO, your office has proposed that 4.5 positions will be eliminated. It is my understanding that as a result of OMRDD's proposal, officers with over twenty (20) years of service will be displaced. This is wrong. The experience that they have cannot be filled by other titles.

I ask that you personally examine the proposed reductions and reconsider OMRDD's plan. I would also be happy to meet with you to discuss NYSCOPBA's legitimate and founded concerns.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'DR', written over a horizontal line.

Donn Rowe, President

cc: Senator Shirley L. Huntley, Chair of the Mental Health Committee
Assemblyman Peter M. Rivera, Chair of the Mental Health Committee
Christopher Hickey, NYSCOPBA Executive Vice President
Jerry DeWitt, NYSCOPBA Vice President – Law Enforcement
Douglas Trotter, NYSCOPBA Business Agent – Law Enforcement
Thomas Sawyer, NYSCOPBA Business Agent – Law Enforcement