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NYSCOPBA PRESIDENT DONN ROWE RESPONDS TO 2013-14 EXECUTIVE BUDGET PROPOSAL

(Albany, NY) -- Donn Rowe, President of the New York State Correctional Officers and Police Benevolent Association (NYSCOPBA), released the following statement in response to Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's 2013-14 Executive Budget proposal:

"Governor Cuomo has, once again, decided to balance the budget on the backs on some of the hardest working New Yorkers. It is a profoundly disappointing decision. New York's Correction Officers have some of the most dangerous jobs in the state; jobs that were made more dangerous by the budgetary decisions of this administration just two years ago. Now, the Governor is looking for even more sacrifice from a group that has already given more than their fair share.

"The Executive Budget proposal includes the shuttering of two facilities – Bayview Correctional Facility in Manhattan and Beacon Correctional Facility in the lower Hudson Valley – which will displace 160 NYSCOPBA members. That's 160 families that will be separated from their loved ones or forced to relocate, which is in addition to the more than 500 that are still suffering the hardships of displacement from these same regions a little more than a year ago. It will be nearly impossible for these members to receive transfers to facilities near their homes.

"Furthermore, the policy decisions behind this budget are even more troubling. If approved, the Governor's budget would close the only remaining female correctional facility south of the Tappan Zee Bridge. This

will make it increasingly difficult to place inmates in facilities close to their homes. Secondly, Bayview and Beacon have alcohol and substance abuse programs, in addition to work release programs, both of which help inmates re-enter society. Part of the way we keep Correction Officers safe is by keeping inmates active and productive while they are serving their sentences.

“Not only will closing these two facilities adversely affect the rehabilitation of countless female inmates, it will also make the system less safe for Correction Officers. By once again jamming more inmates into fewer locations, the state will drive up the inmate to officer ratio and increase the risk of violent incidents inside correctional facilities. Coupled with the state’s consistent inability to sufficiently staff state facilities, the proposals introduced today will increase the level of danger for our members.

"NYSCOPBA members understand, better than most, that these are difficult fiscal times for New York. But that does not justify poor policy decisions that hurt our criminal justice system, or the basic unfairness of treating one class of state worker as worthy of a disproportionate share of the hardship."

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