



Inmate Violence, Contraband Decreased in First Half of 2025

NYSCOPBA Cites Negotiated Policy Changes for Decreases

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Albany, NY – In the first half of 2025, inmate on inmate assaults, inmate on staff assaults and contraband all decreased by double digit percentages, which would be the first time in four years assaults have decreased and three years contraband will have decreased if the current statistics hold out for the remaining half of the year.

At their current levels, inmate on staff assaults will decrease by 10 percentage points, inmate on inmate assaults 16 percentage points and contraband 19 percent. It will mark the first time since 2021 that assaults will decrease and the first time since 2022 that contraband will decrease.

NYSCOPBA contributed the decreases to two significant policy changes it negotiated with DOCCS to end the non-sanctioned work strike this past March.

The implementation of legal mail scanning in April has significantly reduced the amount of contraband getting into prisons, mainly drugs that were being sent into prison disguised as legal mail.

Second, the suspension of HALT in many facilities that are currently understaffed that has restricted the number of programs and inmate interaction that previously contributed to the on-going violence.

Since April of 2022, when HALT was implemented, NYSCOPBA has called for its repeal or amendment. NYSCOPBA consistently cited the skyrocketing violence inside of correctional facilities statewide and the restrictive nature of discipline that existed for inmates who assault staff, other inmates or are caught with drugs or weapons. NYSCOPBA repeatedly called on lawmakers to address the violence to no avail.

“For years now we have sounded the alarm on escalating prison violence and increased drugs and weapons making their way into the hands of inmates. We have consistently lobbied policy makers to address the violence and protect both sworn and civilian staff from being targeted by inmates. Time after time, our voices went unheard and ignored. Now, with HALT suspended or restricted in many facilities, and DOCCS finally implementing a scanning system effective in identifying contraband in legal mail, we are seeing results we predicted would occur years ago. Unfortunately, it took years for the changes to go into effect.

Hopefully, if the current statistics continue through the second half of the year, the progressive lawmakers who pushed through these ridiculous policies will begin to listen to the men and women who work every day in the prisons and are aware of what programs and policies are effective and what aren't. Moving forward, we look forward to working with DOCCS to identify effective measures that can be implemented to make the prisons safe for staff and inmates alike. That certainly would be a positive step for the future of the State's correctional system.” – stated Chris Summers, NYSCOPBA President.