



NYSCOPBA Statement on Recent Misrepresentations of Correctional Staff Actions at the former Sullivan Correctional Facility

November 6, 2025

Albany, NY – The New York State Correctional Officers & Police Benevolent Association (NYSCOPBA), the union representing frontline correctional officers and related staff across New York State’s prison system, strongly refutes the baseless claims made by Senator Julia Salazar regarding the conduct of dedicated corrections officers at the former Sullivan Correctional Facility. These dedicated professionals, who risk their safety daily to maintain order and protect both inmates and the public, have been unjustly maligned by statements that mischaracterize routine and lawful procedures as “inappropriate” or abusive.

The incident in question, involving inmate Ernastiaze Moore in January 2023, was thoroughly reviewed by the New York Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS). As confirmed by DOCCS officials, including spokesman Thomas Mailey, all actions taken by the staff, including the use of pepper spray for cell extraction, physical restraint, and frisk procedures, were fully consistent with established DOCCS policy and procedure. Video footage from the facility corroborates this, showing measured responses to an inmate’s non-compliance in a high-risk environment. No evidence supports allegations of excessive force, sexual misconduct, or deviation from protocol. These officers acted professionally to de-escalate a volatile situation, preventing potential harm to themselves, other staff, and inmates.

NYSCOPBA stands firmly behind our members, who operate under immense pressure in understaffed facilities while adhering to strict guidelines designed to ensure safety and accountability. Claims to the contrary not only demoralize those who serve on the front lines but also undermine the integrity of a system that has implemented reforms, including body cameras and enhanced training, to address legitimate concerns.

It is particularly disappointing that these accusations come from Senator Julia Salazar, who serves as Chairwoman of the New York State Senate Committee on Crime Victims, Crime and Corrections. In this pivotal role, Senator Salazar has direct access to DOCCS policies, procedures, and oversight reports. She is privy to the rigorous standards that govern use-of-force incidents and the exhaustive internal investigations that ensure compliance. We urge her to engage in good-faith dialogue with union representatives and DOCCS leadership, rather than relying on incomplete narratives or selective interpretations of events that cater to her political rhetoric. Misinformation of this nature erodes public trust and distracts from real challenges, such as chronic understaffing and the need for increased resources to support our members.

NYSCOPBA remains committed to transparency, officer safety, and the fair administration of justice. We call on Senator Salazar and all policymakers to prioritize evidence-based reforms that empower corrections staff, rather than politicizing their essential work.