



Statement from the Executive Board of the New York State Correctional Officers & Police Benevolent Association (NYSCOPBA) on Death of Civilian Staff Member at Marcy Correctional Facility

Union Calls for Apology from Senator Salazar for her Remarks Following Tragedy

November 9, 2025

Albany, NY - The tragic death of a civilian chaplain and 20-year veteran of DOCCS, is a profound loss for the entire Marcy Correctional Facility family.

On Friday, November 7, 2025, the staff member took his own life inside the administration building—an act witnessed by staff who immediately rendered aid, applied pressure to his wound, and fought to save a colleague they considered one of their own. Our members are grieving alongside his family, friends, and the broader DOCCS community. DOCCS has activated the Critical Incident Stress Management teams and will continue to provide every resource to support those affected.

In this moment of shared sorrow, **our elected leaders should be focused on one thing: the well-being of the men and women who walk into these facilities every day under immense strain.** Instead, within hours of the incident, **Senator Julia Salazar—Chair of the Senate Crime Victims, Crime and Correction Committee—chose to publicly question why security staff “allowed” a civilian to enter with a firearm,** implying negligence and vowing to “interrogate” the security team.

This is not leadership. This is scapegoating.

Senator Salazar knows—or should know—that **DOCCS policy does not require staff, including civilian employees, to pass through magnetometers.** Entry is managed through clear plastic bags for personal items and **random pat frisks**—a system designed to balance security with operational reality in facilities operating with extreme **staffing vacancies.** The firearm was not

detected because the staff member was not selected for a random search that morning. That is not a failure of our members. **That is the direct result of policies shaped, funded, and overseen by the Legislature—including Senator Salazar’s committee.**

If the Senator is truly committed to preventing future tragedies, she should examine **her own record**:

- Chronic understaffing due to failed policies narrated by her caucus.
- The elimination of discretionary tools and the erosion of staff authority under reforms pushed by her caucus.
- The absence of robust wellness programs for all DOCCS employees—civilian and uniformed alike.

Blaming lobby officers for a suicide enabled by systemic policy failures is not oversight—it is cowardice.

The men and women of NYSCOPBA stand watch in dangerous, under-resourced environments every single day. They do not make the laws. They do not set the budgets. They do not design the entry protocols. **They follow them—often at great personal risk.**

Senator Salazar owes the Marcy staff—and every DOCCS employee—a public apology for her reckless and uninformed remarks. As Chair of the Corrections Committee, she has a responsibility to **learn the policies she critiques** before weaponizing a tragedy to score political points.

We call on all legislators to put politics aside, support the Marcy family in their grief, and work with us to enact **real solutions**: full staffing and comprehensive mental health support for *all* who serve inside our prisons.

Our members deserve respect, not retaliation. They deserve support, not scapegoating.

In solidarity,

The Executive Board