



Inmate Violence and Use of Force Decline While HALT Programming Was Suspended

NYSCOPBA Says DOCCS Data Confirms Policy Suspension Reduced Assaults

For Immediate Release

January 23, 2026

Albany, NY – Newly released data from the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) shows continued reductions in inmate violence and staff use-of-force incidents statewide, reinforcing what NYSCOPBA has long warned: unsafe policies drive violence, and commonsense corrections practices reduce it.

According to DOCCS' January 22, 2026 update, incidents of inmate-on-staff assaults, inmate-on-inmate assaults, and overall use-of-force declined during 2025. A significant factor in those reductions was the suspension of HALT-mandated programming in many facilities for part of the year due to chronic understaffing, which limited inmate movement and reduced opportunities for violent encounters.

NYSCOPBA has consistently maintained that overcrowded programming, uncontrolled inmate interaction, and the lack of meaningful discipline under HALT created a volatile and

dangerous environment inside state prisons. The suspension of HALT programming, combined with other negotiated policy changes, such as the implementation of legal mail scanning, directly contributed to the decrease in assaults reflected in the DOCCS data.

“For years, our members have been forced to work in unsafe conditions created by misguided policies that ignored staffing realities and common sense,” said NYSCOPBA President Chris Summers. “The DOCCS data released today confirms what we have said all along — when HALT programming was suspended and inmate movement was reduced, assaults went down. When contraband was addressed by implementing the aforementioned programs, the numbers went down. These results were entirely predictable.”

NYSCOPBA cautioned that while the reductions are encouraging, they are fragile and reversible if failed policies are reinstated without regard for staffing and safety.

“This should be a wake-up call to the lawmakers who pushed HALT through despite repeated warnings from correctional professionals,” Summers added. “If the goal is safer facilities for staff and inmates alike, then policies must be based on reality, not ideology. We remain committed to working with DOCCS on solutions that actually work and finally put safety first. A starting point would be to take the recommendations of the HALT Committee that was jointly formed between NYSCOPBA, DOCCS and other state Labor Unions.”