



**New York State Correctional Officers  
& Police Benevolent Association, Inc.**

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***"Keeping New York Safe"***

**NYSCOPBA President Chris Summers Calls on Governor Hochul to Intervene in Correctional System Crisis: Urgent Reforms to HALT Act, Contraband Laws, and Double Bunking Required**

**For Immediate Release**

**April 20, 2026**

**Albany, NY** – Today, NYSCOPBA President Chris Summers sent a letter to Governor Kathy Hochul on behalf of the New York State Correctional Officers & Police Benevolent Association (NYSCOPBA), declaring that the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) is in a full-scale systemic emergency.

The letter details an alarming surge in violence, dangerous contraband, staff assaults, overdoses, exposures, and deaths inside state prisons. Specific recent incidents include:

- At Mohawk Correctional Facility, three Correction Officers and two National Guard members were hospitalized after exposure to an unknown substance on papers brought in by a visitor; one officer required intensive care and a ventilator.
- At Clinton Correctional Facility, eight officers were injured in just six days across five separate incidents involving assaults by intoxicated incarcerated individuals and large-scale disturbances with recovered weapons.
- At Coxsackie, a convicted murderer attacked officers with a broken pen, seriously injuring staff.
- At Lakeview, a counselor and an officer were brutally assaulted in a classroom; the same individual later assaulted staff again at Attica while housed in a Residential Rehabilitation Unit (RRU).

- At Upstate Correctional Facility, one incarcerated individual murdered his bunkmate — a preventable tragedy that a review of the perpetrator’s history shows was foreseeable.

In addition, two separate inmate-on-inmate deaths at Riverview, and Gouverneur are under State Police investigation, and DOCCS data shows 44 incarcerated deaths year-to-date as of April 1, including six suicides. Officers at Riverview recently intercepted more than two pounds of marijuana smuggled in a microwave shipment, and multiple visitors have been caught attempting to bring in contraband.

President Summers stated:

“Our correctional facilities are no longer operating under normal conditions. They are under extreme pressure and becoming increasingly unstable and dangerous for everyone inside the walls. Our members are being assaulted. Staff are being exposed to unknown and potentially lethal substances. Contraband is flooding the system and driving disorder, medical emergencies, violence, and death. This is a crisis that demands the Governor’s direct and personal intervention.”

The letter urges Governor Hochul to immediately engage with the State Legislature and advocate for the adoption of the Statewide HALT Committee’s balanced recommendations to amend the Humane Alternatives to Long-Term Solitary Confinement (HALT) Act. Those recommendations include expanding serious offenses eligible for segregated confinement, allowing temporary SHU or RRU placement for protective custody when safety risks are unreasonable, and permitting up to 15 days of SHU for repeated misconduct after alternative interventions have failed.

Summers further called for stronger penalties under New York’s contraband laws for smuggling drugs, weapons, and toxic materials into facilities — whether by visitors, mail, packages, or external deliveries — and for a comprehensive statewide strategy to reduce and ultimately eliminate double bunking where it compromises security and human safety.

“The safety of the men and women who work in our state prisons — and the stability of the entire correctional system — now rests on Governor Hochul’s leadership,” Summers concluded. “We implore her to use the full weight of her office to ensure these critical reforms are passed swiftly. NYSCOPBA stands ready to meet with the Governor or her staff at the earliest opportunity to provide any additional information or support required. The time for action is now.”

**The full letter is attached to the website post.**