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For Immediate Release

NYSCOPBA Members Hold Rally at State Capitol

Members Demand More Staffing and Resources As Assaults on Staff Continue to Rise

Albany , NY - Over 400 NYSCOPBA members held a rally in West Capitol Park this afternoon in a display of strength and unity and to demand respect from the Governor's Office and DOCCS Administration as attacks and assaults on staff continue to occur at an alarming rate inside correctional and forensic psychiatric facilities.

NYSCOPBA's Executive Board was joined by union members from across the state and two dozen elected state officials, including Senate GOP Majority Leader John Flanagan and IDC Leader Jeff Klein, whose message was that Governor Cuomo needs to provide more resources to protect those who protect our communities across New York State.

According to statistics provided by DOCCS, since 2012 Inmate on Inmate Assaults have increased 58 percent, Inmate on Staff Assaults 43 percent, Contraband seized 66 percent and Use of Chemical Agents 115 percent.

Union members overwhelmingly voted down a contract proposal from the state this past February citing the lack of support and respect from DOCCS and the Cuomo Administrations.

"Corrections officers have one of the hardest jobs in New York, putting their lives on the line every day they go to work. For the hard work they do, they deserve safety and respect on the job. Attacks on guards are unacceptable and the Independent Democratic Conference stands with NYSCOPBA to work towards making corrections workers' jobs safer," said IDC Leader Jeff Klein.

"The men and women who serve as correction officers work under some of the most stressful and dangerous conditions in law enforcement. The constant threat of violence among inmates

puts these officers at risk every day. The state must ensure that staffing levels are adequate and that officers receive proper training and equipment in order to keep our correctional facilities, and those who work and live in them, safe," stated Senator Patrick M. Gallivan.

"Today we came to West Capitol Park to send a clear message to the Governor's Administration that our voice will be loud and clear and we will fight for the respect that our members deserve. They work one of the hardest jobs in this nation and they do so with upmost professionalism and integrity; yet, they do not receive the support they deserve from Governor Cuomo. This rally was not about money, it was about giving our members the staffing and resources needed to allow them to do their job in the safest environment possible. It was also about holding inmates accountable for their actions when they choose to attack an officer. Discipline in our prisons has all but disappeared and there is nothing to deter an inmate from attacking staff. DOCCS would rather impose foolish policies like the clear plastic bag for employees rather than focus about what is important – running safe and effective facilities. Until DOCCS and Governor Cuomo open their eyes to what are the real issues, we will continue to pound home this message until it is heard loud and clear," said Michael Powers, NYSCOPBA President.

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