



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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***NYSCOPBA RENEWS CALL FOR MEASURES THAT PROTECT  
CORRECTIONAL STAFF AS CONTRABAND SEIZURES HIT RECORD HIGHS***

**ALBANY, N.Y.** — New York State Correctional Officers & Police Benevolent Association, Inc. (NYSCOPBA) today renewed its call for urgent measures to more effectively regulate packages and materials brought into state correctional facilities.

Attempts to bring drugs and weapons into state correctional facilities reached record levels in 2017, and several incidents throughout this past month show the critical need for changes to current protocols set forth by the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS).

Data collected indicates that 2017 marked the most violent year inside state prisons since 2007, the year statistics began being recorded. Every metric tracked by DOCCS (inmate-on-staff assaults, inmate-on-inmate assaults, use of chemical agents, contraband) rose above the previous year's numbers.

"These alarming statistics reinforce NYSCOPBA's resolve to fight on behalf of our members until measures are enacted that will create a safer environment for inmates and correctional staff alike," said Michael Powers, President of NYSCOPBA. "We stand ready to assist in any way with the adoption of measures that will eliminate the opportunity for dangerous contraband to make its way into our facilities."

On Jan. 30, 2018, correctional officers inspecting inmate packages at Bare Hill Correctional Facility, in Franklin County, found green peppers that had been stuffed with 11 grams of Synthetic Marijuana and 46 scalpel blades (**photos attached**). This incident was one of 311 other incidents in the month of January where contraband was discovered in incoming packages, either through delivery by mail or inmate visitor. All inmate packages are searched in accordance with DOCCS directives.

Details on recent assaults and the seizure of contraband within state prisons can be found at <https://www.nyscopba.org/news-announcements/press-releases/>

NYSOPBA is encouraged by proposed legislation sponsored by Sen. Pamela Helming that would expand contraband screening procedures at state correctional facilities. The plan would allow the random selection and search of visitors' vehicles upon entering a correctional facility's grounds, as well as permit the use of a controlled canine at the entrance of each correctional facility. It would allow electronic imaging scanning, pat frisks and visual searches of visitors, and would provide for the training of staff on up-to-date contraband screening procedures.

"Contraband introduced into prisons continues to be a growing issue and presents dangerous and even life-threatening situations for correctional staff. In the past week, staff intercepted illegal drugs and weapons hidden in packages in two upstate prisons and a downstate woman was arrested trying to smuggle Synthetic Marijuana to an inmate inside the prison during a visit," stated President Powers. "We commend Senator Helming for recognizing the urgent need for DOCCS to implement new methods to reduce the amount of contraband into our correctional facilities."



