



For Immediate Release

February 15, 2019

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Correctional Officers Union Condemns Prison Closure Plan

Proposal would make prisons more dangerous for incarcerated individuals and correctional officers, crush local economies

The statement below can be attributed to Michael Powers, President of the New York State Correctional Officers & Police Benevolent Association, Inc. (NYSCOPBA):

"Once again, New York is putting its residents at risk by proposing to close more prisons. This will unquestionably make our prisons more dangerous. It means consolidating the incarcerated into other prisons, making them overpopulated and increasing the risk of violent behavior. Violence at New York's correctional facilities is already at a historic high.

"The Administration will inevitably attribute closures to the number of open beds in the corrections system, but that's a misleading argument to say the least. Here is the real story. The State continues the dangerous, archaic and borderline cruel practice of double bunking. If the State simply agreed to stop cramming incarcerated individuals together into double bunks like sardines, the number of open beds in the system would diminish substantially. Our officers and advocates for incarcerated persons agree: the State needs to end the inhumane practice of double bunking immediately.

"It is very important to note that closures do not in any way equate to a decrease in number of incarcerated people. Closures mean consolidating the same number of incarcerated people into a smaller area, making remaining prisons overpopulated and increasing the risk of more violent behavior. The numbers do not lie. The prison system has been in existence for more than 200 years, and in each of the last three years, prisons have set records for the number of violent incidents.

"The announcement will also devastate three New York communities with the stroke of a pen. Our officers' families and their communities will be forever and

irreversibly turned upside down. Countless local mom and pop stores, vendors, restaurants, community and jail support groups, just to name a few, will be upended overnight. It goes without saying local governments will suffer dramatically as their tax base will disappear.

"Closures mean destroying the fabric of our officers' communities, and eviscerating local jobs, local tax base and the local economy. We urge New Yorkers to reject this plan outright. Considering yesterday's news of Amazon cancelling its plans, it seems implausible the Administration would announce such a devastating community and job-killing effort just 24 hours later.

"We will continue to advocate on behalf of our members, their families and communities who face one of the most dangerous jobs imaginable and deserve much better treatment from their management."

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About NYSCOPBA: NYSCOPBA represents more than 26,000 New York State employees and retirees from the Security Services Unit. The union was formed in May 1998 and since that time has provided superior representation to membership under the independent and democratic model. The objectives are to improve the terms and conditions of employment, protect members contractual rights, provide high quality representation in the collective bargaining process, communicate effectively with the membership, achieve legislative gains, and to promote the overall welfare of members.