



MEMORANDUM IN OPPOSITION — “HALT”

S.1623/A.2500

A Vote for HALT is an ANTI-LABOR Vote

It is NYSCOPBA’s understanding that the Senate Democratic Conference and Assembly Democratic Conference are currently considering the above referenced legislation prior to the end of session. Let us be clear. The 29,000 active and retired women and men of NYSCOPBA STRONGLY OPPOSE this anti-union legislation that directly threatens the safety of our brothers, sisters and their families who live and work in your districts. We will spare you more about HALT and our officer’s safety — you have heard this from us for years.

We continue to hear many legislators are feeling “pressure” from HALT activists. We suggest you ask HALT activists a simple question: What about the safety of incarcerated individuals in general population who now must do their time amongst violent individuals who would otherwise be in Special Housing Units?

They will have no answer because the great irony of HALT is that it is not about the vast majority of incarcerated individuals who are just doing their time. And you can be rest assured that HALT is not about the blood our officers shed.

The next time you sit in a fake Special Housing Unit in the Legislative Office Building, we suggest you then come to a real jail and take a walk in general population wearing the uniform of your union sisters and brothers for some further context.

Eliminating DOCCS’ ability to deter or restrict violent individuals from general population creates a powder keg for incarcerated individuals and officers alike. That is HALT in a nutshell.

It’s very simple.

A vote for HALT puts the incarcerated in danger. A vote for HALT puts your union sisters and brothers in danger.

A vote for HALT is an anti-labor vote.

Join your union sisters, brothers and their families in opposing “HALT” S.1623/A.2500



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Memorandum in Opposition

S1523 – Senator Sepulveda

A2500 – MoA Aubry

An act to amend the correction law, in relation to restricting the use of segregated confinement and creating alternative therapeutic and rehabilitative confinement options

OPPOSE!

This bill, which would take effect one year after it shall have become law, would, as described in the bill memo “limit the time an inmate can spend in segregated confinement, end the segregated confinement of vulnerable people, restrict the criteria that can result in such confinement, improve conditions of confinement, and create more humane and effective alternatives to such confinement.”

While the aforementioned goals of this legislation may seem, *prima facie*, to be laudable in their quest, the fact of the matter is that the bill as written significantly jeopardizes the safety of those who are there to protect the *entire* incarcerated population – our dedicated Correctional Officers – *and* the vast majority of those incarcerated as well. As with all big issues in criminal justice, the goals of this bill should be studied carefully and comprehensively, with all stakeholders involved, and not rushed through the legislative process simply to satisfy a small segment of the citizenry whose ultimate goal is to totally eliminate the segregation of *anyone* from the incarcerated general population. The primary goal should be the safety and well-being of each and *every* individual behind prison walls, not just those who – oftentimes for their own safety – must be separated from others.

Therefore, the New York State Public Employee Conference, an umbrella organization comprising more than 80 unions and groups representing a wide spectrum of public employees, strongly opposes this legislation, and urges its defeat.

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MEMORANDUM IN OPPOSITION

TITLE:

AN ACT to amend the correction law, in relation to restricting the use of segregated confinement and creating alternative therapeutic and rehabilitative confinement options

**LEGISLATIVE
REFERENCE:**

S.1623 – Sponsored by Senator Sepulveda, et al
Senate Rules Committee

A.2500 – Sponsored by Member of Assembly Aubry, et al
Ways and Means Committee

**SUMMARY OF
PROVISIONS**

This bill would limit the time an inmate can spend in segregated confinement, end the segregated confinement of certain people, change the criteria that can result in such confinement, impose different conditions of confinement, and create alternatives to such confinement without adding resources necessary for the safe implementation of the legislation and without regard to the safety of Correction Officers. The acronym for this legislation is "HALT".

**REASONS FOR
OPPOSITION**

The New York City Correction Officers Benevolent Association (COBA) represents approximately 18,000 active and retired members who provide care, custody and control for inmates and detainees well as City workers inside 16 jail facilities within NYC, most of which are located on Rikers Island. COBA is one of the most progressive, impactful and productive unions in the nation. COBA has focused on the importance of real reform and safety for both their officers and inmates and detainees.

COBA believes that as drafted, HALT will ultimately lead to an increase in the Use of Force (UOF), increased Assaults on Staff (AOS) and inmate on inmate fights in the Punitive Segregation (PS) Units. Currently, there are approximately 100 inmates in PS in NYC jails out of approximately 7,500 detainees and sentenced inmates in custody. The NYC Department of Corrections (DOC) has already been a leader in Punitive Segregation reform efforts in NY. With DOC, COBA has worked hard to find a balance between reducing the use of PS and addressing violence within the facility. COBA has concerns about the operational impact if the HALT bill were to advance. PS provides a way of managing violence. Taken away, everyone within the jails will be placed at risk, as unmanaged violence feeds further violence.

We join with the 29,000 active and retired members of NYSCOBA in opposing this legislation. We urge you to visit the local jail facilities and the State prison facilities and judge for yourself. We urge you to provide the resources needed for dealing with the mentally ill. We challenge you identify the alternative actions Correction Officers should take when assaulted or doused with bodily fluids by inmates and visitors. Until then, this legislation must be stopped.

Accordingly, we recommend that you vote against S.1623/ A.2500.

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