



State Corrections Officers Union Criticizes Governor Cuomo's Plan to Close More Prisons

Albany, NY – The New York State Correctional Officers & Police Benevolent Association (NYSCOPBA) today took issue with the Governor's budget proposal that once again fails to address the realities of the prison system which he oversees. With increased prison violence due to consolidation of facilities, overcrowding of prison dormitories through double-bunking and the impact of closures on communities throughout the state, the Governor's proposal to close prisons misses the mark.

"At a time when prison violence is at an all-time high, the Governor and the Legislature should be working with us and our members to find solutions to make our prisons safer. The last thing we need is incarcerated individuals tightly crammed into prisons, creating nothing more than a powder keg of violence," **said Michael B. Powers, President of NYSCOPBA.**

Over the last 20 years, New York State prisons have seen a 39 percent reduction in the inmate population, but violence in New York State prisons is at an all-time high. NYSCOPBA contends that more must be done than simply closing prisons. That's clearly not the answer.

More than 80 percent of inmates housed in maximum security facilities are convicted of violent felony offenses. In 2019, the incidents of inmate-on-inmate and inmate-on-staff assaults were the highest ever reported by the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS), despite the aforementioned decline.

The Governor's call for more prison closures is shortsighted and fails to consider the devastating impacts a closure can have on the men and women working inside the facilities, their families and the surrounding communities. Fifteen prisons have closed under Governor Cuomo's administration, forcing consolidation of the state's most dangerous criminals into close quarters with one another.

For years NYSCOPBA has been calling on the state to take down double-bunks (**S.6582, A.930**) to spread the inmate population out and return to the intended ratios from when the facilities were constructed. The practice of double-bunking was adopted out of necessity when there was not enough space to house all of New York inmates. But with 30,000 fewer inmates in the system, the time has come for the state to take down the double-bunks, spread the inmate population out and safely right-size the prison system that way.

"We will fight tirelessly for our members to preserve their livelihood and make sure our prison system is as safe as possible. The work that the women and men of NYSCOPBA do to keep our communities safe should be applauded and commended, not attacked," **added Powers.**