



**New York State Correctional Officers
& Police Benevolent Association, Inc.**

"Keeping New York Safe"

***NYSCOPBA Officials Announce Federal Civil Rights Lawsuit Over HALT
Legislation***

State, Governor Cuomo, and DOCCS Named in Suit

For Immediate Release
May 10, 2021

Albany, NY – Today, NYSCOPBA Union Officials formally announced a Federal Civil Rights Lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court in Albany seeking to repeal the recent HALT legislation that was passed by the State Legislature and signed into law by Governor Cuomo on March 31.

[\(web link to lawsuit provided below\)](#)

HALT, which was hastily passed and signed into law without any significant input from stakeholders, will further restrict inmate discipline that was already significantly watered down by the New York Civil Liberties Union Settlement with DOCCS in 2012.

During that time period, assaults on staff, inmate on inmate assaults and contraband have risen dramatically while the inmate population continued to dwindle.

Assaults on staff have increased almost 100 percent and inmate on inmate assaults have increased 85 percent during the same time period that the inmate population has decreased by 20,000.

For years, NYSCOPBA has implored DOCCS and statewide elected officials to take a hard look and research why violence against all staff, sworn and civilian, was increasing in prisons across the state. Those concerns, unfortunately took a back seat to advocacy groups who continued to push

a progressive criminal justice agenda that plain and simple endangered every one of our members.

The simple fact remains - the overwhelming majority of inmates are convicted violent felons. Individuals who committed violent acts on society and were punished and held accountable for their actions. In a prison setting, similar to society, there are rules that need to be followed by those incarcerated. Inmates who cannot follow those rules need to be held accountable, especially for acts of violence against staff and other inmates.

Our members have one of the toughest jobs in law enforcement. They work in often harsh unforgiving environments with little or no fanfare. The State of New York has turned its back on the brave men and women NYSCOPBA.

All HALT will do is forgive violence. It gives brazen, violent inmates a free pass to attack our members. More innocent people will get hurt, more staff will suffer debilitating injuries and more inmates will fall victim to inmate on inmate violence.

"Today's federal lawsuit is the first step to NYSCOPBA finally saying enough is enough! It is unacceptable that our members continue to get attacked and receive little or no support from our elected officials who choose to turn a deaf ear to those men and women who provide safety and security for all New Yorkers. The stories of staff getting viciously attacked and injured are endless and will continue without any meaningful reform to these short sighted policies. Instead of catering to the inmates, our members deserve the respect and support of every state legislator they have sworn to protect." - stated NYSCOPBA President Michael Powers.

https://www.nyscopba.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/210510_Class-Action-Complaint-HALTvs-Cuomo.pdf