



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

“Keeping New York Safe”

NYSCOPBA Officials Respond to Senator Salazar’s Disingenuous Twitter Rant

*State data contradicts Senator Salazar’s claims that the HALT Act
reduces violence in jails and prisons*

*During a recent unannounced visit, Senator Salazar fails to meet with
frontline staff, yet claims she didn’t hear any reports of violence
increasing in facilities*

*Union leaders demand Senator Salazar issue an immediate public
apology*

Albany, NY – The New York State Correctional Officers & Police Benevolent Association Inc. (NYSCOPBA) is reacting to New York State Senator Julia Salazar’s continued inaccurate public statements regarding the violence crisis in New York’s correctional facilities. On Monday October 17th, Senator Salazar made several posts on her [Twitter account](#) claiming that NYSCOPBA was attempting to intimidate her using a mobile billboard in her home Senate District in Brooklyn, as well as other egregious claims about the organization and its members.

According to data publicly posted on the New York State Department of Correction and Community Supervision (DOCCS), assaults on staff incidents in New York’s prisons have increased nearly 40% since April 1, 2022.

“For years, NYSCOPBA warned the New York State Legislature that violence would rise if the HALT Act was enacted in our correctional facilities, and the data proves it,” **said NYSCOPBA President Michael Powers.** “This billboard is part of our continued public awareness campaign to educate the public of the dangers the HALT Act has created for our members and to hold the supporters of HALT accountable for their actions.”

Senator Salazar continued on her social media platform, suggesting HALT is being violated by DOCCS “all the time” and that security measures to keep staff and other incarcerated individuals safe “violate the HALT law.”

“To clear up any confusion, Senator Salazar, who chairs the NYS Crime Victims, Crime and Corrections Committee, blames NYSCOPBA for failing to implement the HALT Act. While I can assure you, HALT is ever present in our prisons, ultimately, NYSCOPBA is not the responsible agency tasked with ensuring that the law is followed,” **said President Powers.**

State data publicly posted by DOCCS shows the number of incarcerated individuals housed in SHU went from nearly 1800 in early 2022, to under 300 after the enactment of HALT. While the numbers fluctuate slightly each month, the number of people housed in a SHU facility is down 66% since March 2022.

“There is no question there is significantly less people being housed in SHU now than prior to HALT. For Senator Salazar to suggest HALT has not been implemented in New York’s correctional facilities is categorically false and deliberately misleading. Meanwhile, in that same time span, prison violence skyrocketed over 30%. The correlation between the two couldn’t be more clear, and it’s concerning that the Corrections Committee Chair doesn’t recognize, or even worse, understand this data,” **said President Powers.**

State data also revealed that the number of staff members injured during a violent assault increased 40% over the first six months of HALT compared to the six months just prior to the implementation of the HALT Act. The State classifies the severity of injuries suffered during an assault incident into five categories: “no injury”, “minor”, “moderate”, “serious” or “severe”. The number of injuries that qualified as “moderate”, “serious” or “severe” jumped a staggering 44% over that same timeframe. Injuries that fall into those categories are “lacerations, concussions, 2nd

degree burns, serious sprains, dislocation, or ligament damage” and often require a trip to an outside hospital. They can also be injuries that “cause obvious disfigurement, protracted impairment of health, and loss of organ function, amputation or injuries that risk cause of death.”

“Senator Salazar mentions a recent visit to Mid-State Correctional Facility where she didn’t hear one “single report from officers that violence has increased,” **said President Powers.** “That can be expected when you tour a prison and don’t actually speak to any officers. Also, the individual who is pictured on the billboard truck parked outside Senator Salazar’s office is an officer from Mid-State Correctional Facility. Unfortunately, this officer has yet to return to work after being brutally assaulted during an unprovoked attack, which required 60 stitches to her forehead and lingering head trauma. My heart goes out to this officer and all staff who are brutally assaulted by an incarcerated individual. I have a suggestion for Senator Salazar, the next time you visit a facility, take the time to speak to some of the staff members or better yet, an officer who was the victim of an unprovoked attack to hear how your HALT Act has negatively impacted their lives,” **said President Powers.**

During her Twitter tirade, Senator Salazar continued to attack NYSCOPBA, calling its members liars, claiming NYSCOPBA didn’t “implement HALT” and identifying the organization as a “bad institution who does the boss’s bidding.”

“For an elected official to publicly state that the men and women of NYSCOPBA are liars is outrageous and requires an immediate public apology. Sadly though, it tracks with other supporters of the HALT Act like Senator Salazar’s colleague, NYS Senator Luis Sepulveda, who in August of this year made a public statement in the media which insinuated that officers are inflating state data by counting an inmate ‘blowing too hard in the direction of an officer’ as assault. I assure you, both of these elected officials couldn’t be more detached from reality,” **said President Powers.** “If Senator Salazar cared more about the safety and security of the state workforce and less about protecting her image, she would acknowledge the data which shows a significant increase in assault incidents, the rise in life-altering staff injuries, and reassess her belief that HALT is ‘designed to prevent violence’. By continuing to refuse to address the prison violence crisis is only emboldening those who continue to prey on our officers.”

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