

A Message to the State Legislators:

On behalf of the members of the New York State Correctional Officers and Police Benevolent Association, Inc., (NYSCOPBA) thank you for taking the time learn about our legislative agenda. Every year we advocate for our members and meet with elected officials to discuss important matters and our legislative agenda and priorities.

NYSCOPBA is a member-driven organization consisting of over 30,000 active and retired state employees. Our active membership is made up of over 15,000 state correction officers and sergeants; and approximately 2000 members in a variety of law enforcement titles in numerous state agencies.

All of NYSCOPBA's members perform vital public safety services in extremely volatile and dangerous working conditions. NYSCOPBA members conduct themselves with professionalism and integrity while putting their lives on the line each and every day to protect our communities.

Over the years, NYSCOPBA has been fortunate to develop many lasting relationships with members of the legislature and their staff. We are grateful for your past and continued support of our members. To our new friends, we welcome you and look forward to developing a long-lasting relationship where, together, we can work to improve on the many issues facing our membership.

NYSCOPBA will continue to advocate on behalf of our members to improve their working conditions, benefits and wages. They deserve it. Hopefully, with your support and friendship, we will work together to honor their commitment and dedication to New York State. Thank you for taking the time to meet with us today.

Best regards,

Chris Summers
NYSCOPBA President

NYSCOPBA's Executive Board

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NYSCOPBA 2024 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

DEATH GAMBLE

NYSCOPBA supports **A9084/S8408** which would provide an in-service death benefit for Section 89 retirement plan members by allowing beneficiaries of deceased members to elect to receive a lump sum death benefit equivalent to the deceased member's pension.

FORCIBLE TOUCHING

NYSCOPBA supports **A1606/S5506** which would establish the crime of forcible touching of a correction officer and increase penalties for certain offenses committed against correction officers.

NOTICE of FOIL

NYSCOPBA supports **A6146-A/S5500-A** which would provide all public employees with proper notification whenever their personal information has been released to the public pursuant to a FOIL request.

SHTA RETIREMENT OPTION

NYSCOPBA supports **A6343-A/S6054-A** which would allow NYSCOPBA SHTA members at OMH to file to change their retirement election during a prescribed period of time.

SSO 3/4 DISABILITY

NYSCOPBA supports **A6342-A/S5831-A** which would provide safety and security officers with a 3/4 disability retirement benefit.

INTENTIONAL SPITTING

NYSCOPBA supports **A1548/S3121** which would criminalize the act of intentional expectoration on an employee of DOCCS and all first responders.

FIX TIER 6

NYSCOPBA support reforms for Tier 6 retirement plan members. Reforms to Tier 6 are needed to improve recruitment and retention of the state workforce. State workers are working through staffing shortages across all agencies, especially in law enforcement titles. Tier 6 reforms such as a standard 3% contribution rate for all employees and limiting caps on overtime for contribution rate and FAS calculations would help in the recruitment and retention of public employees.

NYSCOPBA OPPOSES PRISON CLOSURES

The Governor's Executive Budget proposal has called for closing up to 5 prisons with 90 days notice. NYSCOPBA strongly opposes prison closures, especially with only 90-day notice.

This is a slap in the face to our union members who have endured numerous closures in the past and continue to work in the most violent conditions in the state. Violent incidents have increased while the prison population and consequences for bad behavior have decreased. Rather than housing the incarcerated individuals (I.I.'s) in less space, the State should spread out the population to create a safer environment for all.

The HALT law has taken away many vital tools needed to keep the prison population safe and has created incentives for bad behavior. Resources are now being directed to the 5% of bad actors while the remaining population suffers. HALT has resulted in the highest levels of violence ever recorded.

In 2023, violence in prison reached an all-time high, following the closure of 24 prisons since 2010. There were 1673 assaults on staff by I.I.'s; and over 2000 incidents of I.I. on I.I. violence recorded. With over 75% of the prison population convicted of violent felony offenses, trends for violence in 2024 show no signs of slowing down. Closing more prisons will only lead to more violence.

We urge the legislature to use caution before accepting this short-sighted proposal. Fewer prisons does not equal safer prisons.

NYSCOPBA OPPOSES S8480

This bill would place final decision-making authority regarding discipline of DOCCS staff for acts of serious misconduct solely in the hands of the DOCCS Commissioner.

NYSCOPBA OPPOSES HALT 2.0

NYSCOPBA opposes A8364/S7772 - the so-called "Rights Behind Bars Act" - which would further remove necessary tools needed to maintain safety and security in state correctional facilities.

