



NYSCOPBA President Denounces Great Meadow and Sullivan Correctional Facility Closures

Citing Historic Levels of Violence and Decreased Staffing as Priorities, Not Additional Closures

For Immediate Release

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Albany, NY – President Chris Summers denounced DOCCS plan to close Great Meadow and Sullivan Correctional Facilities amidst record levels of violence and staffing shortages that continue to plague state facilities.

With today’s announcement that both facilities will close in 90 days, we express frustration and continued disappointment that the State believes closing prisons will remedy significant staffing deficits and reduce historic levels of violence and that it waited a year to make their announcement further subjecting our members and their families with additional hardships.

In the past year, staffing levels amongst officers and sergeants has decreased by over 1600, while the prison population has increased by over 2000 inmates. It is a formula that has led to increased attacks on staff and created unsafe working conditions.

“For years, we have demanded that DOCCS and the State of New York take decisive action to increase staffing in our prison system,” stated President Summers. “The goal was always straightforward: recruit more qualified candidates and retain officers to stabilize staffing. For the past decade we have seen round after round of prison closures that have failed to fix the long-term problem. Our members work tirelessly to provide an increasingly program-focused prison environment for incarcerated individuals as a result of the disastrous HALT Act. Additional

programs require more staff, but recruitment of new officers has lagged significantly and officers eligible to retire are walking out the door in droves as a result of dangerous working conditions and mandated overtime. As a result of staffing shortages and mandatory overtime, members spend more time working in the prison than they do with their families and their quality of life suffers as a result.”

“Redistributing staff through prison closures will accomplish the same thing it has always accomplished: a short term staffing boost to a handful of facilities with little to no long term relief. Furthermore, the State waited too long to make this announcement at a time during the middle of summer when staffing relief is needed most. The State of New York needs to take bold and creative action to fix the staffing issue that is creating low morale and pushing members to their limits. Closing prisons and expecting different results certainly is not bold and creative, it is shortsighted.” said President Summers.

NYSCOPBA will insure that proper reduction in force protocols are followed and assist members in getting the needed information to potentially make life changing decisions for members of those two facilities. This is a lengthy process, but it happens quickly, and our members have lives and families that come before the job. Their lives are now further complicated by this late announcement because they will have to consider moving closer to their new prison, which requires uprooting their families on the eve of a new school year in September. It would serve the State of New York well to remember that our members have families, and they pay the price for these poor decisions.