



Community Holds Rally to Denounce Great Meadow Closure

Family Members, NYSCOPBA Members and State, Federal and Local Officials Attend Event

For Immediate Release

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Fort Ann, NY – Today, a rally to save Great Meadow Correctional Facility organized by family members of officers assigned to the facility and community members was attended by NYSCOPBA’s Executive Board and federal, state and county elected officials. Rally organizers and elected officials called on Governor Hochul to put a stop to the closures and instead focus on vital issues such as on-going violence against staff, short staffing, recruitment and retention of officers.

The Governor announced in April that up to five prisons would be closed in the upcoming budget. In July, DOCCS announced that Great Meadow and Sullivan Correctional Facilities would be shuttered and all staff would be transferred to other facilities across the state.

“I would like to extend my gratitude to the community and family members who organized the rally. It was one of the largest rallies organized to oppose prison closures in recent memory. The announcement that Great Meadow and Sullivan Correctional Facilities would be closed follows a troubling trend over the past decade of the State closing prisons to save money over the safety of staff and the overall protection of the communities in which these facilities reside.” stated NYSCOPBA President Chris Summers.

In the past year, DOCCS lost 1600 officers through attrition, retirements, and resignations. In the same time period, the number of inmates have increased by 2100 across the state. Assaults on staff are occurring at historic levels. At the current pace, assaults on staff will increase 30 percent increase from 2023 and a 100 percent increase in the last five years. It is a pace that is not sustainable.

Closing prisons also creates hardships for officers, civilian staff and their families, some who have to make the difficult decision to uproot their family and move to a different community or even worse, leave the security of their job and livelihood so they don't have to move.

It will also have a negative economic impact on Washington and Sullivan Counties where both prisons are located when officers, civilian staff and their families have to move to another part of the state. Those rural businesses, where hundreds of staff and their families shop and eat out , will suffer significantly as a result of lost revenue.

“Instead of closing prisons, the state should be focused on how to recruit new officers, retain the experience of existing officers and improve the safety in every single prison. The safety of those brave men and women certainly should never be at the expense of saving money to balance the budget. You can't put a value on protecting the men and women who protect us.” said President Summers.