



Single Year Record of Assaults on Staff in New York State Prisons Broken Again

Latest State Data Reveals Assaults on Staff Exceeded 2023 by October

Inmate on Inmate Assaults on Pace to Increase by 37 Percent

Union Leadership Once Again Calls on Governor, State Legislature to Address Violence

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Albany, NY – The New York State Correctional Officers & Police Benevolent Association, Inc. (NYSCOPBA) is calling on Governor Hochul and the State Legislature to address the escalating violence in state prisons. Recent data indicate that both inmate-on-staff and inmate-on-inmate assaults have already exceeded 2023 levels with two months still left in the calendar year, underscoring a crisis that shows no signs of improvement.

NYSCOPBA President Chris Summers stated, “Enough is enough—our members cannot and should not be used as punching bags. NYSCOPBA members, working in the most challenging of conditions, are being assaulted at record rates, yet their health and safety continue to be disregarded by those responsible for protecting the state workforce. The statistics speak volumes: 2024 is set to shatter last year’s assault records. At the current rate, assaults on staff are projected to increase by 24 percent, marking a 47 percent rise since 2021. Inmate-on-inmate assaults are expected to surge by 37 percent from last year and a staggering 118 percent since 2021. We have made it clear to the Governor, State Legislature, and DOCCS that this system is unsustainable, and the safety inside the facilities are being neglected by state leaders.”

Summers continued, “The progressive criminal justice policies and continued appeasement of inmate advocacy groups have led to unprecedented levels of violence within our prisons. The State’s lack of action is an insult to the hardworking members of NYSCOPBA. There is no reasonable argument to be made that these policies have improved conditions inside our prisons.”

According to state data, as of October 27, assaults on staff have reached 1,736, surpassing the 1,677 reported in 2023. At this pace, assaults are likely to exceed 2,000 for the first time. Inmate-on-inmate assaults currently stand at 2,423, also outpacing last year’s total of 2,121.

Further compounding the violence are the dwindling staffing levels and rising inmate population. Since January 3, 2023, there are 1,893 fewer correction officers in state facilities, while the inmate population has increased by 2,216.

Adding to the problem, is the State’s ongoing struggle to recruit and retain officers.

“The State needs to make the job more attractive to prospective candidates and improve conditions for current officers, who are leaving in droves,” Summers said. “Officers are retiring early, resigning, or transferring to other agencies due to the violence and prison closures that have created undue hardships for them and their families. We have repeatedly presented the reality of the unsafe work environment facing our members, exacerbated by a weakened disciplinary system, staffing shortages, and mandatory overtime that have pushed staff to the brink. State policies have directly contributed to this current state and need to be addressed immediately.”