



March 8, 2017

For Immediate Release

NYSCOPBA Responds to Governor Cuomo's Inaccurate Statement

Press Release on "Raise The Age" Falsely Implies Prison Staff Abuse

Albany , NY - "Corrections officers face some of the most dangerous work conditions imaginable while working every day to keep our communities safe. It is completely unacceptable that the Governor would make misleading and disingenuous remarks about corrections officers to score some cheap political points in pursuit of his Raise The Age proposal.

There is not one single case in which a member of NYSCOPBA has been disciplined in an abuse allegation made by a 16 or 17-year-old inmate. Instead of making ambiguous statements without any support, the Governor needs to provide factual information to back up his claims before maligning corrections officers who work hard to keep our communities safe.

While the Governor has clearly jumped on this issue for political purposes, he continues to ignore the systemic cause of violence in our prisons. Assaults on staff have increased nearly 60 percent over the last five years, while the discovery of dangerous drugs and weapons skyrocketed by 50 percent during the same time period. These figures clearly signal that a new approach to reforming our corrections system is needed – one that requires a thoughtful and productive dialogue to address this problem, not more of the same blame game that Albany has played for far too many years.

As an example of the constant dangers facing our officers, just yesterday three officers at Hudson Correctional Facility were injured when a 17-year-old inmate refused to follow an officer's orders and violently attacked him. It took several officers to get the inmate under control. Two officers had to be transported to a local hospital, where one was treated for a broken ankle and the second received stitches to his elbow and bruised ribs. A third officer was also injured in the attack.

Incidents like this are a prime example of why NYSCOPBA has led the fight for more staffing, new equipment and technology, and training opportunities to ensure the safety of those who live and work in our prisons. We hope that the Governor will be a partner in this effort to quell the violence that has plagued our prisons. Partnership starts with telling the truth, and falsely accusing officers of contributing to the violence that threatens 16 and 17 year olds in our prisons is far from the constructive conversation that is needed to address the dangers our officers and inmates face."

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MARCH 7, 2017 Albany, NY

Statement from Governor Andrew M. Cuomo on Raise the Age Advocacy Day

“New Yorkers from every corner of this state will converge in Albany today to ask their elected officials to do what 48 other states in this country have already done: treat minors as minors and raise the age for criminal responsibility.

“It is far past time for the Senate to join us, and pass my proposal to Raise the Age and reform our juvenile criminal law.

“New York is one of only two states in the nation that automatically processes our 16- and 17-year-olds in the adult criminal justice system, no matter the alleged offense and despite the fact that the majority of teenagers arrested in recent years have been locked up for non-violent crimes. This unfair practice places some of our youngest New Yorkers in a prison system where they are more likely to be assaulted, to be injured by prison staff, and to commit suicide than their peers processed as juveniles. They are also far more likely to be re-arrested and re-incarcerated.

“Many problems have no clear or proven solution, but this one does. By raising the age, we can ensure that juveniles receive the intervention and rehabilitation they need to break the vicious cycle of recidivism and increase public safety for all New Yorkers.

“To learn more about Raise the Age in New York, please read my op-ed co-authored by Van Jones in *USA Today*.”

Contact the Governor's Press Office



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