

THE SENATE  
STATE OF NEW YORK  
SENATOR PATRICK M. GALLIVAN  
59TH DISTRICT

February 15, 2018

Hon. Andrew Cuomo  
Governor, New York State  
The Capitol  
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo,

As work continues on the 2018-19 state budget, I urge you to include funding for the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision to improve the safety and security of state operated correctional institutions for officers, staff and inmates. While your administration has made several recommendations to ensure the safety and welfare of inmates, we must at a minimum, do more to provide resources and programs necessary to protect our employees who work under some of the most dangerous conditions possible.

New York State is not doing enough to ensure safety within our correctional facilities. As Chairman of the Senate Committee on Crime Victims, Crime and Correction, I am aware of the problems correctional officers and other staff face on a daily basis. According to DOCCS, inmate-on-staff assaults jumped nearly 24-percent from 2013 to 2017, while the number of inmate-on-inmate assaults has increased every year for the past five years. Assaults resulted in 338 injuries to staff during the fourth quarter of 2017 alone. The department also reports the number of incidents involving contraband increased from 2,712 incidents in 2013 to 4,131 incidents last year. These increases are not acceptable and we must commit resources to make our prisons as safe as possible for staff and inmates alike.

Acting Commissioner Annucci has testified about a variety of technological enhancements aimed at improving safety and security, including the installation of fixed camera systems in many institutions. He also detailed several additional pilot programs, such as the use of body cameras and pepper spray, which have proven effective in reducing assaults and injuries at test facilities. It is time to provide the necessary funding to expand these programs throughout the department. In an effort to curtail contraband inside state facilities, we should also re-instate the secure vendor program to better control items entering the prisons and expand the use of K-9's, metal detectors and body scanners. Statewide expansion and implementation of these measures is imperative.

Improving safety inside our correctional institutions requires a balanced approach, which includes an obligation to provide a secure working environment for all state employees, as well as the safe, humane and constitutional confinement of inmates. We are not meeting this obligation. I ask you to demonstrate your commitment to hard working officers and staff, and our constitutional obligation, by including adequate funding in your 30-day budget amendments to provide resources and programs to make New York's correctional facilities as safe as possible. I look forward to working with you on this issue.

Sincerely,



Patrick M. Gallivan  
State Senate, 59<sup>th</sup> District

Cc: John Flanagan, Temporary President and Majority Leader NYS Senate  
Anthony Annucci, Acting Commissioner DOCCS  
Mike Powers, President NYS Correctional Officers and Police Benevolent Association