



NY State Assembly Member Carrie Woerner

198 State Street

Albany, NY 12248

Dear NY State Assembly Member Carrie Woerner:



As a constituent represented by the New York State Correctional

Officers and Police Benevolent Association, Inc. (NYSCOPBA), I am



writing to express my concerns with the Governor's budget proposal

to close up to five unidentified correctional facilities with only

90 days' notice. This is another slap in the face to me and my

brothers and sisters and I urge you to reject the Governor's

proposal to close more prisons.



Current state law requires a one-year notification prior to the

closing of a correctional facility; along with an economic impact



study on the affected community - these are laws passed by the state

legislature that are continuously ignored by the 2nd Floor. It is

unfair and unreasonable to expect staff and the affected communities

to make life-altering decisions with only 90 days' notice. Families

will be uprooted and broken, homes will need to be purchased and

sold, leases will be broken, children will be required to switch

schools, commutes to work will be extended, and businesses will

suffer; all evidenced by the impacts of the 20+ prison closures we



have experienced in the last decade. When will it end?



The Governor and DOCCS claim that there will be no staff layoffs

as a result of prison closures. Sadly though, we know that many of

my colleagues in security and civilian titles will not remain

employed by DOCCS due to prison closures. We are already

experiencing a severe staffing shortage in security and civilian

titles in DOCCS. Prison closures will only exacerbate the crisis



and cause dedicated workers to seek employment elsewhere. Closing

prisons is not a sustainable recruitment and retention tool when we

are in need of hundreds of bodies to fill our rank. How can we

expect prospective employees to take these jobs if they are

concerned that they will be forced to uproot their families this

year, next year, or sometime down the road?



Additionally, the environment that we work in has become



increasingly dangerous since the implementation of the Humane

Alternative to Long-Term Solitary Confinement (HALT) law. New York's

prison violence has increased to levels we have never seen before,

even with a lower prison population. Over 75% of the prison

population is incarcerated for violent felony offenses. We have

suffered dramatic increases with assaults-on-staff and an even

higher increases of assaults on the incarcerated individuals by

other incarcerated individuals. Reducing the capacity of the prison



system will cram more violent prisoners into less space resulting in

more violence. This is a formula that has been proven as the

violence continues to increase with every round of closures. Having

the space to spread the prison population out, separate problematic

individuals, and protect vulnerable populations is an important tool

needed to maintain safety in prison. Closing more prisons will only

add to the extremely volatile working and living conditions we are

currently experiencing.





As my elected representative, I kindly ask that you support the

members of NYSCOPBA and work with the leadership in your house to

oppose the closure up to five unidentified prisons. Thank you for

your time, attention and consideration of this very important issue.





Sincerely,





Ben Moeller

