



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pamela Helming

Statement from Senator Helming on DOCCS Staffing

PAMELA HELMING February 14, 2025

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The memo circulated by Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) Commissioner Martuscello advising prison superintendents that 70% of DOCCS' original staffing model is the new 100% is an unacceptable response to the situation in our state correctional facilities. As report after report indicates, the level and frequency of violent incidents in correctional facilities across the state continues to grow. A 30 percent reduction in staff will only exacerbate threats to staff and inmate safety.

It is troubling that this memo was circulated just three days after a female officer at Groveland Correctional Facility was choked, punched, and kicked in the face and body by an inmate as she sat at her desk. Just a few days later, Collins Correctional Facility in Erie County was forced to lock down and multiple staff members were injured as inmates took control of dorms inside the facility.

In response to these and other incidents, we should be taking steps to increase staffing and improve safety.

My colleagues and I in the Republican conference have introduced numerous pieces of legislation to improve safety in correctional facilities, including legislation to repeal the HALT ACT, increase security measures, and crack down on the possession of prison contraband. I also carry legislation that would provide our state corrections officers with a 20-year retirement option. This would grant them a similar retirement option to those currently available to most law enforcement officers and attract more applicants to bolster the workforce.

Now is the time to for the Governor and the Legislature to take decisive action to ensure the safety of both corrections staff and inmates and not accept that chronic understaffing of facilities is the new normal.

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