



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt, Members Of The WNY Legislative Delegation Blast DOCCS Over Plans To Release Inmates Early

ROBERT G. ORTT April 4, 2025

| ISSUE: **DOCCS, NEW YORK STATE CORRECTIONS OFFICERS, CORRECTIONS, HALT ACT**



Collins, NY – Today **Senator Rob Ortt** was joined by **Senator George Borrello, Assemblyman David DiPietro and Assemblyman Paul Bologna** at the Collins Correctional Facility to criticize the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision for their latest failures to keep New Yorkers safe.

In a memo circulated earlier this week, DOCCS Commissioner Daniel Martuscello stated the department would start releasing inmates before the end of their sentences due to the current

staffing crisis created by his department, and instructed state prison superintendents to compile a list of inmates eligible for release.

“DOCCS’ decision to release inmates before the completion of these individual’s sentences is the result of Governor Hochul and her department’s complete and utter failure to protect our correctional officers and adequately staff our correctional facilities. Correction officers and their families spent weeks highlighting how unsafe their working conditions are. Instead of listening and instituting meaningful change, DOCCS and Governor Hochul ignored their pleas and fired over 2,000 of these hard-working men and women - leaving our prison system more vulnerable than ever. Rather than just release inmates, DOCCS and Governor Hochul should rehire the officers they blackballed and clean up the mess they created.” **said Senator Rob Ortt.**

“This is government malpractice. The decision by Governor Hochul and DOCCS to release inmates early because of a staffing crisis they created is an outrageous betrayal of public trust and a slap in the face to the brave correctional officers who risk their lives every day. Instead of releasing inmates, they should be reinstating the officers they wrongfully terminated and taking real steps to restore order and safety in our correctional system. This crisis will continue to fester until the governor and the legislature find the backbone to repeal the disastrous HALT Act and finally put the safety of our prisons and our communities first,” **said Senator George Borello.**

“This is another disgraceful consequence of Albany’s pro-criminal agenda. Instead of fixing the staffing crisis they created by gutting our correctional system, DOCCS has been dealt with a brutally difficult hand and is left with no other option but to release criminals early. This is a complete failure of leadership on Albany’s part. Our correctional officers are under attack, our prisons are in chaos and now New Yorkers have to pay the price for their incompetence. Hochul needs to stop working against our correctional officers,” **said Assemblyman David DiPietro.**

Firing over 2,000 qualified correctional officers was an unnecessary knee-jerk reaction, one that will inevitably create a much larger problem at our correctional facilities and undermine the safety of both staff and inmates. This decision fails to consider the long-term consequences of removing experienced personnel who are critical to maintaining order and security within these institutions,” **said Assemblyman Angelo Morinello.** “Rather than taking swift and drastic action, DOCCS should

have remained at the negotiating table to find a reasonable solution that addresses the safety concerns of our correctional officers while maintaining the integrity of the correctional system. The men and women serving on the front lines of law enforcement deserve safe working conditions, proper support, and respect for the hard work they do every day. Rather than resorting to the early release of criminals, which poses a risk to public safety, a far more effective and responsible solution would be to rehire the well-trained officers who already know the ins and outs of their roles. These officers have invaluable institutional knowledge and experience that cannot be easily replaced. Removing them from service only weakens our correctional system and puts both our officers and the communities they protect at greater risk. It is crucial that we find a more thoughtful and sustainable approach to ensuring the safety and efficiency of our correctional facilities, while also safeguarding the well-being of the dedicated men and women who serve in them.”

“The New York State Corrections situation has devolved into a grotesque abuse of power and retribution, in prohibiting 2,000 correction officers who were advocating for their own safety, were never charged with, or convicted of a crime, from serving the public. Instead of dealing with a self-inflicted crisis, New York State has now created a public safety blunder by releasing criminals back onto the streets,” **said Assemblyman Paul Bologna.** “The Legislature has a responsibility to correct this egregious mistake, repeal HALT, return correction officers to their positions, get criminals off the streets, and keep the public safe. While we should expect better of our elected leaders, unfortunately, I am not surprised, this is more of the same pro-criminal, anti-law enforcement agenda we have been seeing.”

"The staffing crisis in our state prisons was made worse by the decision to needlessly fire over 2,000 correction officers. Terminating workers under the Taylor Law is extreme and has made our facilities even less safe for officers, staff, and inmates. Instead of releasing inmates, the state can immediately address the staffing concerns by re-hiring those fired correction officers who want their jobs back,” **said Senator Patrick Gallivan.**

“To keep our communities and correction officers safe, we must rehire terminated officers, recruit more officers, end the ridiculous amount of mandatory overtime, and repeal, not just pause, the HALT Act. My conference has always stood behind correction officers and law enforcement, and

will continue to do so, even as my colleagues in the majority aim to make their jobs more difficult and favor the rights and well-being of criminals over those in law enforcement,” **concluded Senator Ort.**