



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Darrel J. Aubertine

Senator Aubertine: Senate Budget Proposal Would Save OCF

DARREL J. AUBERTINE March 22, 2010

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Budget resolution released today includes language to restore facility, 287 jobs

ALBANY (March 22, 2010)—State Sen. Darrel J. Aubertine announced today that the budget resolution approved by the New York State Senate Majority proposes language to restore the Ogdensburg Correctional Facility (OCF) in the 2010-11 State Budget.

“The people of Ogdensburg have been heard here in the Senate and I am pleased to say that the Senate rejects the closure of Ogdensburg Correctional Facility,” Sen. Aubertine said. “The case was clear and we will continue working to make the case for this well run, efficient facility. The community, the families and the 300 employees came together to get us this far and we will continue working together.”

"Saving Ogdensburg would be a tremendous victory for public safety and our state economy," said Donn Rowe, President of New York State Correctional Officers Police Benevolent Association. "The State Senate's pledge to restore \$24 million will help restore the public's trust that even during tough economic times, our government knows closing prisons is a choice New York cannot afford. Senator Aubertine and the Senate leadership should be applauded for their leadership on this effort."

The Governor's proposed budget included the closure of four Upstate correctional facilities, including OCF. The Senator immediately started working on behalf of these facilities and with clear community support has made the case for OCF to be restored. Because the executive proposal gave notice of closure to the facility, to ensure it remains open, the Senate has proposed language that specifically restores the full and continued operation of OCF.

"Voting 'no' is not an option for saving this facility," Sen. Aubertine said. "We need to pass a budget that includes specific language preventing the commissioner from closing Ogdensburg Correctional now or in the future. That's what we have proposed here in the Senate and I will continue working to ensure that the final budget reflects this priority. We've cleared a major hurdle today and we are moving in the right direction. We must continue to work together and stand up for our community until this budget is passed and signed into law."

With more than 97 percent of its staffed beds occupied, a staff that operates the facility under budget each year, inmate incident rates at just a fraction of what downstate facilities endure, and overtime budgets less than half of what most other facilities pay, Ogdensburg Correctional Facility is a model of efficiency. In fact, the largest expense is payroll, which when distributed among 287 workers in a community of around 11,000 provides a significant economic impact. The ripple effect of losing this facility would likely cause the loss of close to 1,000 jobs in the community.

Supporters of OCF will join the Senator in Albany tomorrow to continue the push to save this facility. The Senator has helped put together a rally and sponsored an exhibit to display the facts supporting reinstatement of the Ogdensburg Correctional Facility. The Senator said he will continue drawing on the community's support to ensure the Senate's language is adopted and continue to make the case for the three other facilities as well.