



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kathleen A. Marchione

Statement from NYS Senator Kathy Marchione (R,C-Halfmoon) regarding today's Joint Legislative Budget Hearing on Public Protection

KATHLEEN A. MARCHIONE February 5, 2014

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Statement from NYS Senator Kathy Marchione (R,C-Halfmoon) regarding today's Joint Legislative Budget Hearing on Public Protection:

"I want to thank everyone who joined us today for the Joint Legislative Budget Hearing on Public Protection and provided their testimony. I appreciate Commissioner Annucci and others appearing before us to answer questions. The questions we asked, and the feedback we received, are vital to ensuring proper legislative oversight and a public safety budget that truly serves all New Yorkers.

I represent the 43rd Senate District, which includes Mt. McGregor Correctional Facility that has been targeted for closure. I strongly oppose this proposed closure and will continue advocating to keep Mt. McGregor open.

In total, 15 correctional facilities since 2011 have been targeted for closure, those are misplaced priorities -- the wrong priorities. Last year, I introduced legislation to require the legislature's ratification before any more correctional facilities could be closed. My bill would ensure the legislature is heard.

The closure of Mt. McGregor would cost our community 320 public safety positions and hurt the local economy. I disagree with the administration's closure proposal that would impact the public safety professionals who serve New York with honor and work in some of the toughest, most stressful and dangerous conditions imaginable. Very few New Yorkers could walk those corridors.

Having toured Mt. McGregor this September, I saw firsthand the personal commitment of our public safety professionals. I also saw a great deal of construction -- estimated to cost taxpayers nearly \$3 million -- taking place at a facility targeted for closure. Renovations of dorms, installations of new windows, work crews performing multiple facade upgrades, all of this was occurring. At the time, I asked -- and was told -- that much of the work was actually being done by New Jersey contractors. That was disappointing to see and frustrating to hear. I asked Commissioner Annucci about this expenditure and am unsatisfied with the answers.

When the proposed closure was announced in July, I said that trying to balance the State Budget by cutting jobs, closing correctional facilities, lessening public safety and hurting our upstate economy was no bargain. I once again say that and continue to call on the administration to reverse course and keep Mt. McGregor open."