



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara, Palmesano and Friend continue to criticize Cuomo administration decision to close Monterey Shock

THOMAS F. O'MARA March 31, 2014

| ISSUE: [CRIMINAL](#)



Albany, N.Y., March 31—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C-Big Flats), Assemblyman Phil Palmesano (R,C,I-Corning) and Assemblyman Chris Friend (R-Big Flats) today criticized Governor Andrew Cuomo for refusing to renegotiate his administration's plan to close the Monterey Shock Incarceration Correctional Facility later this year.

The final 2014-15 state budget agreed upon by Cuomo and legislative leaders, and being acted on today by both the Senate and Assembly, does not contain funding to keep Monterey open.

As part of the new budget, the Monterey facility and grounds will be designated as one of New York's new tax-free zones in an effort to attract redevelopment initiatives, including new businesses and industries.

O'Mara, Palmesano and Friend said in a joint statement, "Together with our local leaders, Monterey employees, and former Monterey inmates and their families, we tried until the very end of this year's budget negotiations to convince Governor Cuomo to keep Monterey Shock open. We made our case on the merits and on the undeniable facts that Monterey saves state and local taxpayer dollars, effectively reduces recidivism and turns lives around. The Cuomo administration refused to negotiate a better solution for the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes economy, local property taxpayers, local community services, and local workers and their families. It's the wrong decision."

The lawmakers said that despite the budget setback, they will continue their efforts to try to find a way to save a shock program at Monterey. They also said that they would continue to closely monitor the efforts of the Cuomo administration to offer transfer and other reemployment opportunities to remaining Monterey staff.

Since last July when the Cuomo administration first announced its plan to shut down Monterey, O'Mara, Palmesano, Friend and other local leaders across the region have joined together with Monterey staff, former inmates and their families and many concerned citizens to urge Cuomo to reverse the decision.

In private meetings and at public rallies, they've highlighted the facility's critical importance to the regional economy, especially at a time when so many communities have been hard hit by job losses. They've stressed the cost effectiveness of Monterey, noting that the shock program has saved the state more than \$1 billion through reduced incarceration times and lower recidivism rates among shock graduates. Additionally, numerous community leaders throughout Schuyler, Chemung, Steuben and Yates counties have stressed that Monterey inmate work crews have saved local communities and taxpayers millions of dollars over the years by assisting with local infrastructure, natural disaster cleanup and repair, and other community enhancement projects.