



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ritchie Bill To Keep Drones Away From Prisons Clears Senate

PATTY RITCHIE June 7, 2017



State Senator Patty Ritchie has announced a bill she sponsors, which would ban civilian drone use within 1,000 feet of a correctional facility to further protect corrections officers, was passed by the Senate.

This measure stems from recent incidents in which drones were used to drop off contraband, including weapons and drugs, in correctional facilities. Recently, a drone was found inside a correctional facility in Auburn.

Under the legislation (S.2125), violators would face a \$1000 penalty for the first offense and each additional offense is punishable as a misdemeanor. However, the restrictions would not apply to the operation of a drone approved by the Federal Aviation Administration for commercial purposes.

“Every day, corrections officers put their safety on the line in order to protect us,” said Senator Ritchie. “As the daughter of a former corrections officer, I know how important—and dangerous—their work can be. This legislation creates a safer environment for employees of our state’s prisons by restricting the use of civilian operated drones near our state’s prisons, while at the same time providing some peace of mind for family members.”

Drone use has grown in popularity, including in law enforcement, land surveillance, wildlife tracking, search and rescue operations, disaster response, border patrol and photography. Currently, New York has 54 correctional facilities with 54,700 inmates and 20,000 corrections officers.

The legislation now heads to the Assembly.