



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie Bill to Ban Metal Utensils from State Prisons Clears Senate Committee

BRIAN DWYER May 31, 2018

| ISSUE: **CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS, PRISON SAFETY**



A bill sponsored by State Senate Patty Ritchie that would ban metal eating utensils in state prisons cleared a key Senate committee today.

The measure ([S.8206](#)) was prompted by an incident earlier this year where an inmate at the Franklin Correctional Facility was stabbed in the head by a fellow prisoner using a metal fork, and the increasing discovery of contraband and violence against officers and other

inmates across the state prison system.

“Assaults like this are an unfortunate reminder that prisons can be dangerous places both for inmates and the officers who are charged with maintaining safety and security,” said Senator Ritchie. “This bill is a common sense step to making our prisons and keeping our corrections officers safe.”

The bill was approved by the Senate’s Committee on Crime, Crime Victims and Corrections, with only a single negative vote from a downstate Senator who complained that inmates—many serving time for violent and serious crimes—should continue to be able to access metal forks and knives. Senator Ritchie serves on the committee.

In 2017, the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision reported 798 assaults on corrections staff statewide, and 1,220 inmate assaults on other prisoners. This year, corrections officers reported finding more than 3,000 contraband items.

Assemblyman Billy Jones, a former corrections officer, sponsors the bill in the Assembly.

“This legislation is a step in the right direction when it comes to ensuring the safety of the civilians and officers that work within correctional facilities,” Assemblyman Jones said. “By eliminating the use of metal utensils that are consistently used as weapons we are protecting the health and well-being of those that work to keep our communities safe.”

State prison officials have told Senator Ritchie that, while most of the state’s prisons have eliminated metal utensils, they are still in use at 12 facilities, housing thousands of inmates.

RELATED LEGISLATION

2017-S8206

- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Relates to providing plastic or composite eating utensils at state correctional facilities

April 18, 2018

In Senate Committee [Finance](#)

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Do you support this bill?