



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Statement from Senator Patty Ritchie

PATTY RITCHIE November 8, 2021



In announcing that Ogdensburg Correctional Facility is slated to close, Governor Hochul has delivered yet another devastating blow to the North Country. When the Governor took office, I was optimistic. Surely, as a fellow Upstate New Yorker, she would have a better understanding of the very serious challenges we face. Today's news confirms she could not care less about causing further damage to an already economically fragile part of our state.

Instead of taking a hard look at how yet another prison closure and the loss of hundreds of jobs will affect our region, she has fallen lockstep with the downstate Democrats and their agenda that puts criminals before the rights and safety of law abiding New Yorkers. People in the North Country did not ask for things like bail reform and other changes that have caused prison populations to decrease and crime rates to skyrocket. Yet once again, Albany is taking it out on us.

It seems like just yesterday that the previous administration announced Watertown Correctional Facility would be closing. Today, it still sits empty, with no concrete plans for its repurposing. I ask the Governor—what is the plan for Watertown Correctional Facility? What will the plan be for Ogdensburg Correctional Facility, which as many know, is in the midst of a major, nearly \$10 million capital project slated to be completed in January? To many, it would only seem logical to have a plan for these facilities before they close, so they do not end up as vacant, eyesores in the communities where they exist. As I have come to find though, most decisions made by Albany bureaucrats are far from logical.

To say I am deeply disappointed and angered by today's announcement would be an understatement. In the days to come, I am fully committed to fighting alongside the prison's hundreds of hardworking employees and the community to show Governor Hochul that this is a misguided decision, which will have a devastating impact on hundreds of local families and the North Country as a whole.