

SUPPORT SERVICES FOR YOUTH IN OCFS FACILITIES



**STOP THE CLOSURES OF ADIRONDACK, CATTARAUGUS AND GREAT
VALLEY RESIDENTIAL CENTERS, PYRAMID RECEPTION CENTER,
ROCHESTER AND SYRACUSE GROUP HOMES; EVENING REPORTING
CENTERS IN ALBANY, BUFFALO AND SYRACUSE AND BED
REDUCTIONS AT TRYON AND ALLEN RESIDENTIAL CENTERS!
STOP THE LAYOFF OF 127 POSITIONS!
KEEP THE 12 MONTH NOTICE LAW!**

FACT

It is premature to be dismantling the system before the Governor's Task Force on Transforming New York State's Juvenile Justice System has completed its review of the state's juvenile justice system. Valuable resources may be eliminated.

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In defiance of Legislative intent, OCFS has deliberately kept youth out of the facilities they want to close, supposedly to save money. However, a greater percentage of youth are being sent to private facilities, where they spend an average 3.7 months longer than in OCFS, despite committing less serious offenses and having less severe mental health, substance abuse and other needs. One-third of youth placed by OCFS in private facilities fail in these placements and are transferred to OCFS facilities for more appropriate treatment. Twenty-one such youth were re-admitted through Pyramid Reception Center in December 2008.

FACT OCFS continues to sink \$1 million per year and send additional youth into a program that has been proven unsuccessful. OCFS' evaluation of the Multisystemic Therapy (MST) program found that participation was not associated with lower rates of rearrest, reconviction, or reincarceration for OCFS youth. Boys who participated in MST were more likely to be rearrested for a violent felony offense than boys in the control group. The failure of the program was attributed to the severity and intractability of the problems facing OCFS youth and their families.

FACT Numerous research studies have documented that small scale environments enable improved treatments for youth. OCFS' current bed plan, which includes eliminating several small scale facility treatment programs, contradicts this treatment philosophy. OCFS should repatriate children receiving services out-of-state or in privately run facilities and treat them at underutilized facilities.

FACT Commissioner Carrión claims she wants to place children in small facilities closer to their homes, but this plan eliminates residential treatment options from large regions of upstate NY. Furthermore, transferring the juvenile reception operation from Pyramid Reception Center to Ella McQueen Residential Center removes a small residential facility as a resource for NYC youth.

FACT OCFS is being short sighted in its rush to close facilities for the treatment of youth. The need for residential facilities for juvenile offenders is cyclical; recent evidence points to an increase in juvenile crime. Juvenile arrests in New York City increased 41% from 2002 to 2006.

FACT Instead of laying off employees, staff should be redeployed. A draft OCFS report on rightsizing recommends that resources be redistributed "to run safer, better programs with more comprehensive treatment services for youth." Fifty one percent of OCFS youth have special education needs, 67% have serious mental health needs. Currently OCFS is not adequately staffed to serve these youth.

FACT Closures and staff reductions will negatively affect the economies of hard hit upstate regions. The plan to close Cattaraugus, Great Valley and Adirondack Residential Centers and downsize the Tryon and Allen programs will have far reaching economic impact well beyond the affected employees. The facilities' closures will have an adverse impact on numerous local, private providers that rely on employment and contracted services with these programs.

FACT Elimination of group homes and Evening Reporting Centers (ERCs) will reduce youth's ability to successfully reintegrate into their communities. ERCs provide a safe haven for youth leaving residential care, a place to avoid the temptations of the street and receive counseling and other services that cannot be provided through aftercare offices. Research shows that appropriate services promote more successful outcomes in the community.

FACT This budget would eliminate the legislatively enacted twelve month notice provision for OCFS closures in order to ensure adequate time to make plans for affected residents, communities and employees. This requirement should be observed.

FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR CHILDREN AND OUR COMMUNITIES

RESTORE \$12.4 MILLION TO THE OCFS BUDGET

KEEP YOUTH FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS OPEN



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