

# KEEP OUR COMMUNITIES SAFE!

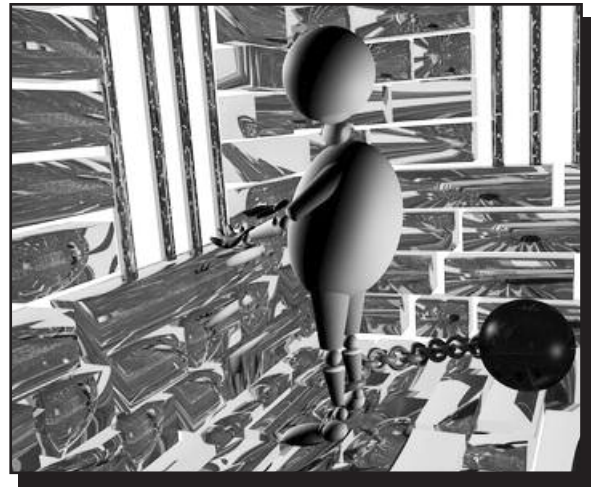
## Stop the Proposed Prison Closures and Keep 12-Month Notice Laws

### The Proposal:

*The Executive Budget proposes closing an unknown number of minimum and medium security correctional facilities operated by the Department of Correctional and Community Services (DOCCS) without identifying them and without notice.*

### The Problem:

*There are more than 10,000 inmates in the maximum- and medium-security prisons who are forced to “double bunk”, putting two dangerous criminals in a space designed for one. Double bunking was originally used as a short-term solution to an overcrowding population. Today, it has become a long-term budgetary solution. In addition, maximum security facilities are at 122 percent capacity. These closures will have a serious negative impact on inmates and their safe transition back into our communities. It will also hurt corrections employees and local businesses. This is particularly true in already economically depressed areas in upstate NY which have some of the highest unemployment rates in the state. They need time to develop a plan to adapt to any closure; that’s why we have a 12-month notice law.*



### The Solution:

*Reject closing DOCCS facilities and repealing the 12-month notice law. Any excess capacity at minimum and medium security should be used to reduce current overcrowding at maximum security facilities and eliminate double bunking. The Governor should identify any specific DOCCS facilities he wishes to close and such closures should be debated and decided on their own merits.*

**FACT**

Since 2008, DOCCS has closed 5 prisons and nearly 2,500 beds which have resulted in the loss of nearly 2000 positions, forcing overcrowding and dangerous conditions.

**FACT**

Due to the reduced staff and crowded conditions, inmate-on-inmate assaults, inmate-on-staff assaults, inmate suicides and contraband have all increased from 2009 to 2010. **Inmate-on-inmate assaults are up more than 12 percent and inmate suicides have doubled.**

**FACT**

**Minimum and medium security beds should be more widely used to transition inmates out of maximum security facilities and into our communities.** In the past DOCCS used to “step-down” inmates from maximum security facilities to medium security facilities and finally to minimum security facilities as the inmate got closer to his or her release date. DOCCS has changed this procedure and now keeps most inmates in maximum security facilities for a longer period of time. Most inmates are never allowed to go to a minimum security facility. DOCCS can change their own rules to make better use of minimum security facilities as part of inmates’ transition to the community.

**FACT**

Crime rates are cyclical and the number of people sent to prison is affected by population and other trends. In times of economic recession, crime tends to increase. Closing these facilities may lead to future capacity shortages and hazardous situations such as increased double-bunking.

**FACT**

Notice provisions do not prevent the Executive from closing facilities. They ensure that the implementation of closure decisions are thought-out with ample opportunity for uprooted service recipients, economically devastated communities, and families of employees who may lose their jobs to plan for the drastic impacts of closures.

**FACT**

In unique cases, where immediate action is required, the Governor has asked for and received special consideration from the legislature to close a facility notwithstanding the notice requirements. This is an appropriate check and balance on the Governor’s authority which the Legislature should not abdicate.

**FACT**

Without a 12-month notice law, the Governor can unilaterally close facilities with no opportunity for legislators to advocate for their community’s interests.

# Keep Our Communities Safe!



**New York State Public Employees Federation, AFL-CIO**

REPRESENTING 56,000 PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL EMPLOYEES

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