



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

Head of OCFS Must Go

JAMES L. SEWARD May 26, 2010

| ISSUE: **CRIME, JUVENILE CRIMINAL JUSTICE**



ALBANY, 05/26/10 – State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I-Oneonta) today joined several senate colleagues in calling for the immediate resignation of New York State Office of Children and Family Services Commissioner Gladys Carrion for sanctioning a state-taxpayer funded sex-party at a youth facility that houses killers and other violent criminals.

“Time and again, Commissioner Carrion has endorsed unsafe and unwise policies, endangering staff members and failing to suitably rehabilitate inmates housed at youth prisons,” said Senator

Seward. **“The latest allegation of sexual behavior involving an underage girl at an Orange County facility warrants immediate and serious consequences.”**

Currently, there are three state agency investigations into the incident which took place at Goshen Secure Center in Orange County on December 12, 2009. According to reports, girls as young as 15 were transported into the prison to attend the dance with convicted killers and other dangerous criminals. A lap dance was videotaped by a surveillance camera and other sexual acts possibly were committed.

One prison employee, Tony Collado, said that he was ordered to drive two women invited to the dance in a state car from a street corner in Albany to Goshen and back -- a distance of 230 miles round trip.

“My complaints to the higher-ups about what happened at this dance were ignored. Things are spinning out of control at Goshen and I know other facilities are having similar problems. I've been hit with phone receivers, punched in the face on numerous occasions and some of my fellow workers have been on the opposite end of much worse. What happened at this dance was the last straw and I felt that coming forward was the right thing to do. Both the staff and residents should not be exposed to this type of stuff,” said Mr. Collado.

“Bringing teenage girls to youth prisons at taxpayers’ expense is unacceptable, and rewarding convicted rapists and murders with this type of entertainment is deplorable. This is just one of many failed policies endorsed by Commissioner Carrion. New York is grappling with an unprecedented fiscal crisis and cannot afford this type of waste and abuse,” Seward continued.

A special legislative task force on reform of the New York state juvenile justice system recently uncovered a number of incidents at facilities around the state demonstrating an emerging trend in relation to violent youths and residential services. The task force was formed to address a growing concern by community members, youth facility staff, and law

enforcement officials who cited the closure of 14 youth facilities and reporting centers throughout the state, along with newly-implemented policies set forth by OCFS, as the reason for a spike in youth violence.

“Innocent people who work at these facilities are losing their jobs, and worse yet, suffering serious injuries. The system must be reformed, and that reform needs to start at the top with the resignation of Commissioner Carrion whose failed policies have ruined more lives than they have helped,” Seward concluded.