



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie Jail Crowding Bill Ok'd by Senate Panel

PATTY RITCHIE March 21, 2012

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Aids Oswego, Jefferson, Other Counties Facing Inmate Crunch

A bill sponsored by State Senator Patty Ritchie that would help Oswego, Jefferson and other counties facing an inmate crunch in their crowded local jails has been approved by a key Senate committee today. The Senate's Crime and Corrections Committee on Tuesday approved the bill, S.5498, which would require payment to the counties for any state inmates who are held in a county jail beyond 10 days.

"Taxpayers in Oswego, Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties are being forced to foot the bill for inmates who are being held in county jails, but who really belong in state lock-ups," Senator Ritchie said.

"Besides leading to overcrowding, it forces our local Sheriffs to house inmates in facilities in other parts of the state, and increases costs for transportation and security, and these inmates shouldn't be the counties' responsibility."

Oswego County's Legislature recently had to authorize an extra \$200,000 payment for inmates housed in other counties because Oswego's 159-bed jail is filled to capacity. Many of those inmates are parolees who are awaiting transfer to state prisons.

"By failing to take these prisoners—or paying counties for housing state inmates—New York State is contributing to our jail crowding and forcing local taxpayers to foot the bill," said Oswego County Sheriff Reule "Moe" Todd. "Senator Ritchie's bill is all about fairness, and I applaud the Senator for taking the lead to fix this problem, which Albany created."

Under Senator Ritchie's bill, the state would have to accept these inmates within 10 days or pay a fee to counties for housing them, restoring a policy that was repealed in 2009.

The bill still must be approved by the full Senate.