



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Bonacic

Senate Passes Bonacic Bill to Give Counties Relief on Jail Mandate

JOHN J. BONACIC June 6, 2012

Senate Passes Legislation Removing Requirement that Counties Maintain Jail; Allows Counties to Share Long Term Costs of Jail Construction

The State Senate unanimously passed legislation (S.2142A) today, sponsored by State Senator John Bonacic to end the mandate that each county maintain its own jail. “This is mandate relief. Counties should be able to innovate and share services,” Bonacic said.

This is the second time the Senate has passed the mandate relief. The first time was in 2010, when it also passed unanimously. Under the bill, counties would be able to contract with each other for the joint construction and/or joint maintenance of jails. For example, Sullivan County would be able to contract with Ulster County, who recently completed their jail, to have a long term financing, operating, and debt service agreement – even though Ulster’s jail is already built. Likewise, the legislation would allow two counties who both need to build new jails to enter into a contract and plan and construct the entire jail with a long term shared services agreement.

Sullivan County is presently contemplating constructing a new, State mandated jail. At the same time, over the past approximately ten years, each County in New York surrounding Sullivan – Ulster, Delaware, and Orange, have built new jails.

There has been a lot of support for addressing the State mandate of each county maintaining its own jail.

Sullivan County officials have repeatedly expressed concern about the mandated costs of a new jail.

The Times Herald Record in an editorial dated January 8, 2009 called for better collaboration in shared jail services. SUNY New Paltz has also released [a report on regional jail collaboration](#) and Patterns for Progress [has looked in particular at the antiquated Sullivan County Jail](#).

The State Senate has also passed legislation banning new unfunded mandates for several years. “Sharing services is common sense mandate relief. I am pleased the Senate has now twice – with bi-partisan support, passed this legislation. It is my hope that the Assembly will take this up and provide much needed relief to our property taxpayers,” Senator Bonacic said.

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