



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie's Jefferson County Jail Sharing Bill Signed Into Law

PATTY RITCHIE September 4, 2014

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Mandate Relief Measure Clears the Way to Allow Local Police Use County Lockup

A mandate relief measure sponsored by Senator Patty Ritchie that will let Watertown and other Jefferson County police forces once again use the county jail to hold detainees—a long-standing practice that helped save local tax dollars until state inspectors nixed the arrangement—was signed into law today.

“The long-standing and common sense practice of sharing jail facilities saved money for taxpayers across Jefferson County, until the practice was stopped earlier this year,” Senator Ritchie said. “Albany should support local governments in finding innovative ways to share services and cut costs, and so I’m pleased that the Governor has signed my bill into law.”

For more than two decades, the county had shared space at the jail for pre-arraigned city detainees, but the State Commission on Correction, which oversees local jails, vetoed the practice, citing an older state law. As a result, city police had to make other arrangements for holding pre-arraigned suspects, including making expensive modifications to the old city jail, located in City Hall.

The new law, Chapter 346 of 2014 (S.7138), which takes effect immediately, allows the county to negotiate a new jail-sharing arrangement with Watertown or any other local police force in Jefferson County.