



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie Launches Petition Against Free College For Inmates

[PATTY RITCHIE](#) August 7, 2017

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Following the announcement of a plan to offer free college courses to prisoners in facilities across New York State, State Senator Patty Ritchie is launching a petition against providing free college for inmates.

On Monday, Governor Cuomo announced the launch of the “College-in-Prison Reentry Program,” which will provide college-level education and training at 17 New York State prisons—including Cape Vincent, Gouverneur and Watertown correctional facilities, with Jefferson Community College providing classes—over the next five years. The initiative is being funded via large bank settlements secured by the Manhattan District Attorney’s Office.

“When we take steps to provide those behind bars with higher education opportunities at no cost, it sends the wrong message to other, law-abiding individuals who work incredibly hard to pay for college,” said Senator Patty Ritchie.

“New York should be taking steps to make college more affordable for students and families—not focusing on increased efforts to educate inmates. Locally, I would rather see our educators deployed to further address the diverse higher educational needs of our region, including working to serve the growing number of non-traditional students associated with Fort Drum.”

Those interested in signing Senator Ritchie’s petition opposing free college for inmates can do so by clicking the link at the top of her homepage.