



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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## Ritchie: Correctional Officers, Employees Need to be Protected as Coronavirus Pandemic Continues

PATTY RITCHIE March 31, 2020



As the daughter of a retired correctional officer, I know those who work in our prisons have very dangerous, demanding jobs. When you add anxiety over the possibility of contracting Coronavirus into the mix, the job becomes that much more stressful not only for those who work in our prisons, but also their loved ones.

That is why I am urging the State to allow our correctional officers and other prison staff to take steps that will help protect them from the spread of this very serious illness. Currently,

those who work in our prisons are prohibited from bringing their own personal protective equipment (PPE). This is unacceptable. At the very least, we need to take steps immediately to allow them to do so, and if possible, provide them with PPE that will ensure they are protected while on the job.

Already, more than 50 correctional officers have confirmed cases of Coronavirus, and hundreds of others are in self-isolation. The longer we wait to allow our correctional officers and prison staff to utilize PPE, the more likely it becomes that there could be an outbreak in our prison system. The time to take action is now, and I will be continuing to urge the State to take steps right away to protect the health of those who work in our prisons, and the loved ones they go home to every day.