



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ritchie, Blankenbush and Walczyk Urge Governor to Reconsider Resuming Visits at NYS Correctional Facilities

PATTY RITCHIE August 5, 2020



State Senator Patty Ritchie along with Assemblymen Ken Blankenbush and Mark Walczyk [are calling on the Governor](#) to reconsider resuming visitations at New York State correctional facilities.

Visitations at maximum-security prisons resumed today, August 5th. Visits at all other facilities are slated to resume on Saturday, August 8th.

In a letter to the Governor the lawmakers—who represent a region that includes five state correctional facilities—pointed out the health risks associated with allowing individuals from areas of our state with significantly higher rates of COVID-19 into communities with much lower COVID-19 numbers.

“By allowing visitors to come to our region from other areas of the state—including those with significantly higher COVID-19 infection rates—we are increasing the likelihood that those who work in our prisons will contract the virus, bring it home to their families and in turn, spark community spread,” their letter stated.

The group also pointed out the irony that while individuals can now visit inmates in prisons, other types of visits or in-person activities remain restricted. These include visits to nursing home facilities, attending certain in-person graduation ceremonies and being prevented from attending funerals, weddings and other events due to quarantine restrictions, among other scenarios.

“In other heartbreaking situations, members of our military have been denied the opportunity to reunite with their families in New York following training or deployment in other states,” their letter stated. “Additionally, in recent weeks, our offices have heard from a number of people expressing frustration over the fact they are not permitted to be at the hospital with loved ones following major surgeries or with spouses for prenatal appointments.”

The lawmakers also requested that if correctional facility visitations continue to be permitted, guidelines be established that would allow those in the situations referenced in their letter to safely and responsibly be with their loved ones.

To read a copy of the letter, [click here](#).

