



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pamela Helming

Senator Helming Statement on State's Plan to Close Willard Drug Treatment Campus

PAMELA HELMING November 8, 2021



"This morning, I learned through media reports that the state Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) has confirmed its plan to close an additional six correctional facilities in New York State on March 10, 2022, including one in my district – the Willard Drug Treatment Campus in Seneca County.

Immediately, I reached out to Acting DOCCS Commissioner Anthony Annucci about this news and I spoke with him this afternoon. I shared my concerns about the impact of

Willard's closure on the community, and the more than 300 employees and their families, who I am thinking of today. To those Correction Officers and staff, please know how grateful I am for your hard work, professionalism, and dedicated service. Commissioner Annucci advised me that DOCCS will be working to assist those impacted by this closure. We will hold them accountable to that.

In addition, I brought other issues to the Commissioner's attention, including addressing impacts on infrastructure and related costs to the community, the fact that Willard is being closed at a time when substance abuse rates are increasing, and how to continue and potentially expand services provided onsite by the state Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS).

The state needs to understand the total ripple effects of these closures and be held accountable for implementing plans for the future of these facilities. The Butler Correctional Facility in Wayne County, which the state closed in 2014, still remains vacant.

Finally, the fact that I learned of these closures from media reports goes against the very ethos of transparency and collaboration touted by the new administration. I will also be contacting Governor Hochul about this news and make sure our local leaders have a seat at the table for every next step."