



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

## Statement from Senator O'Mara on the closing of the Southport Correctional facility

THOMAS F. O'MARA March 9, 2022

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**Elmira, N.Y., March 9**—State Senator Tom O’Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) today released the following statement on the closing of the Southport Correctional Facility:

“The closing of the Southport Correctional Facility will mark yet another casualty of the damaging, soft-on-crime direction New York State has followed under former Governor Cuomo, his successor Governor Hochul, and a State Legislature under one-party, Albany Democrat control.

“Governor Hochul's abruptly announced decision last November to close the Southport Correctional Facility, and several other state prisons including the Willard facility in Seneca County, came as a great shock to this community and region. There was no advance warning. There was no meaningful local input or outreach to local officials, the correctional officers union, or the representatives of the hundreds of non-uniformed employees.

“It appears that Governor Hochul simply followed through with the prison closure determinations that Governor Cuomo had made prior to his resignation.

“These decisions impact hundreds of local correctional officers and prison staff, which means hundreds of local families and an already hard-hit local economy. It is going to be a costly and severe hardship for many local officers and their families, who are being forced to relocate or be faced with a long commute to a new position.

“Furthermore, it continues to ignore an increasingly violent crime wave throughout this state, including an explosive and dangerous prison environment that the state itself acknowledges. It makes no sense when New York in recent years has already invested tens of millions of dollars to enhance the Southport facility and programming, and at a time when Governor Hochul should be focused on spreading out the inmate population, decreasing inmate density, and better protecting the men and women working in our

prisons. We need to be focusing on greater safety within the system as a whole."

Last November, the Hochul administration announced that Southport, Willard, and three other New York State prisons would close as of March 10, 2022.