

THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK



SENATOR PATTY RITCHIE
48TH DISTRICT
OSWEGO, JEFFERSON, ST. LAWRENCE COUNTIES

SECRETARY OF THE SENATE MINORITY

RANKING MINORITY MEMBER
ENERGY AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS
LOCAL GOVERNMENT

COMMITTEES
ELECTIONS
FINANCE
HEALTH
VETERANS, HOMELAND SECURITY AND
MILITARY AFFAIRS
WOMEN'S ISSUES
MEMBER
LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION ON RURAL
RESOURCES

December 9, 2020

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor
Executive Chamber
The Capitol
Albany, NY 12225

Dear Governor Cuomo:

In recent weeks, a number of constituents have reached out to my office to express concerns regarding continued visitations in New York State correctional facilities.

As you know, my senate district includes five correctional facilities. While the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the region I represent continues to increase, it is still relatively low when compared to other parts of the state. Correctional officers, others who work inside these facilities and their loved ones are increasingly concerned that as cases continue to spike throughout the state, allowing for continued visitation will increase their risk for exposure. By allowing individuals from across the state to visit North Country correctional facilities, we are putting not only those who work inside prisons and the incarcerated at risk, but also the community at large; as those visiting surely stop along the way at our local convenience stores, gas stations, restaurants and other locations.

I am aware the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) suspended visitation at certain facilities due to spikes in COVID-19 cases. As statewide case numbers continue to climb, I would respectfully encourage you to take that same course of action and suspend visitation at facilities where it is still permitted. In addition, I would also encourage you to consider suspending any non-essential inmate movement.

REPLY TO: ALBANY OFFICE: ROOM 302, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING, ALBANY, NEW YORK 12247 (518) 455-3438
 JEFFERSON COUNTY OFFICE: 317 WASHINGTON STREET, ROOM 418, WATERTOWN, NEW YORK 13601 (315) 782-3418
 OSWEGO COUNTY OFFICE: 46 EAST BRIDGE STREET, FIRST FLOOR, OSWEGO, NEW YORK 13126 (315) 342-2057
 ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY OFFICE: 330 FORD STREET, OGDENSBURG, NEW YORK 13669 (315) 393-3024

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As the pandemic continues, we all have to make sacrifices to protect our own health and safety, as well as the health and safety of our fellow New Yorkers. Just as many are not permitted to see their loved ones in nursing homes, or others are encouraged not to gather with friends and family, there should also be a pause on visitations in New York's correctional facilities. This is a necessary step in stopping the spread of COVID-19, protecting the health of those inside our prisons and safeguarding communities where these facilities exist.

Thank you for your consideration of my requests. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to my office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patty Ritchie". The signature is stylized with large, overlapping loops.

Patty Ritchie
State Senator

cc: Anthony Annucci, Acting Commissioner of the New York State Department of
Corrections and Community Supervision