

STATE OF NEW YORK

ANDREW W. GOODELL
ASSEMBLYMAN, 150TH DISTRICT
MINORITY LEADER PRO TEMPORE



GEORGE M. BORRELLO
SENATOR, 57TH DISTRICT
RANKING MEMBER OF AGRICULTURE

August 15, 2022

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Governor Hochul,

In the wake of the horrific attack on Salman Rushdie at Chautauqua Institution on Friday, proposals for strengthening security at this esteemed venue have understandably taken on new urgency. We all agree that the safety of visitors and residents at this cultural landmark is of the utmost importance.

That is why we were glad to hear you commit to signing Senate Bill 421/Assembly Bill 5038, the legislation we sponsor that would authorize the designation of Chautauqua Institution's public safety officers as "peace officers."

To that end, we are writing to respectfully request that you convene a special session of the Legislature to allow for the passage and enactment of this measure into law.

This legislation would designate the public safety officers of the Chautauqua Institution as peace officers. As peace officers, these individuals would be required to complete a minimum of 180 hours of training and would have many of the same powers of law enforcement personnel. They would be empowered to make arrests; use physical and deadly force, if necessary; issue appearance tickets; and exercise other powers authorized by state or local law. With the appropriate permits, they would also be able to carry firearms.

While a similar version of this bill passed both houses of the Legislature in 2014 when the political leadership was more supportive of law enforcement, under our current legislative leadership it has been blocked from moving forward.

However, in light of last week's terrible events and with your vocal support, we are confident this legislation would advance and finally provide Chautauqua Institution with the security it needs to better protect its patrons and residents.

Currently, there is a private security force in place. However, it lacks the authority to act as forcefully as may be needed to address serious security threats. Without legal standing, these individuals also face the ever-present risk of lawsuits. Under these constraints, it is difficult to function effectively.

In light of Friday's brutal attack, it is clear that we must empower the organization's public safety officers with the authority they need to provide the highest level of security to this cherished venue. As a longtime patron of Chautauqua Institution, yourself, we are hopeful that you will work with us to enact this needed measure for the benefit of this wonderful cultural destination and all those it serves.

Many thanks for your consideration of our request. We look forward to working with you on this critical issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "George M. Borrello". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

George M. Borrello
57th Senate District

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrew Goodell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Andrew Goodell
150th Assembly District