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NYS Senator Luis Sepúlveda Statement on Governor Hochul Signing S.2211

Bronx, NY— Luis R. Sepúlveda, State Senator for New York’s 32nd Senatorial District released the following statement on Senate Bill S.2211 signed by Governor Hochul.

Last week, Governor Hochul signed my bill S.2211 which would prohibit the use of double-bunked housing in correctional facilities. In the late 1980s, the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision authorized the double bunking of incarcerated individuals to address the expanding prison population of that period. In doing so, the department increased the number of incarcerated individuals housed in a medium secure dormitory, typically designed to accommodate up to 50 incarcerated individuals, to between 60 and 90 incarcerated individuals. While we still have a long way to go, the prison population has declined severely since the late 1980s. The practice of double bunking poses a number of security risks for incarcerated individuals and correctional officers alike. Not only is it a security concern, but COVID-19 has made it a public health concern. Prisons are already congregated settings where it is hard to social distance, thus banning the use of double-bunking can save lives. Ensuring the safety and security of our correctional facilities is crucial and enables programming and rehabilitation to be successful. Preventing double bunking would allow these important changes to happen.

"The safety and security of correction officers, staff and incarcerated individuals must be a priority in all of our facilities," said State Senator Gallivan. "By design, dorm-style settings allow for greater mobility of incarcerated individuals. Preventing the use of double bunks will help limit the risk of disturbances and provide for a safer environment for everyone."

I would like to thank State Senator Gallivan for allowing me to sponsor this bill, Assembly Member Billy Jones for his hard work in the Assembly, and Governor Hochul for taking a step to make our correctional facilities safer.

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