

February 20, 2020

RE: Fast Track Closure of State Prisons

Dear Legislator:

As a constituent and a state employee represented by the Public Employees Federation (PEF), I am extremely concerned that the Governor, in his Executive Budget, seeks to expedite the closure of an undetermined number of correctional facilities with only 90 days notice. As you may know, state law requires that at least 12 months written notice must be provided to impacted unions, M/C employees and host communities prior to any closure.

The Legislature, in its wisdom, developed a law to fairly deal with the closure of correctional facilities. However, in his executive budget proposal, the Governor is looking to usurp that authority.

Staff and affected communities need more than 90 days to plan. There are many logistical concerns that must be carefully addressed prior to any closure. From the moving of inmates to the uprooting of families due to job relocation, three months is not an appropriate length of time. Homes will need to be sold, children's school enrollment changed and new jobs found in unfamiliar communities.

In addition, number and location of the facility or facilities to be closed are unknown. These closures will also impact ancillary businesses located near the correctional facilities from gas stations and diners to grocery stores and barber shops. These businesses should also have the courtesy of the full 12 months so that they can make appropriate decisions regarding the investments in staff or renovations.

As my elected representative, I kindly ask that you work with the leadership in your house to **remove Part F of the Public Protection and General Government Article VII Budget Bill (A.9505/S.7505)** to allow the Governor to prematurely close up to three unidentified prisons without the proper notice. Thank you for your time, attention and consideration of this very important issue.

Sincerely,
