



## Stop closure of state prisons

Dear Legislator:

As a constituent and/or a state employee represented by the Public Employees Federation (PEF), I am extremely concerned that the Governor, in her Executive Budget, seeks to expedite the closure of up to five yet-to-be-announced 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. PEF opposes these closures.

Additionally, given the implementation of the Humane Alternative to Long-Term Solitary Confinement (HALT) law and the inability of the state to hire sufficient correctional officers to ensure appropriate security, space is an important buffer to keep people safe. PEF is concerned that these closures will increase the incarcerated population in certain facilities which will, in turn, result in increases in assaults and violence against vulnerable incarcerated individuals, correction officers and staff. We have already seen a dramatic increase in assaults in the last few years, even as the prison population has decreased.

It is also unfair to expect staff and the affected communities to plan their next steps with only 90 days' notice. There are many logistical concerns that must be carefully addressed prior to any closure -- from the moving of incarcerated individuals and the potential affect on their loved ones to the uprooting of families due to job relocation. Three months is not an appropriate length of time to accomplish everything that must be done -- homes will need to be sold, children's school enrollments changed, and new jobs found in unfamiliar communities. 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 have the courtesy of the full 12 months so that they can make appropriate decisions regarding their investments in staff or renovations.

As my elected representative, I kindly ask that you work with the leadership in your house to reject Part D of the Public Protection and General Government Article VII Budget Bill (A.8805/S.8305) to allow the Governor to close up to five unidentified prisons. Thank you for your time, attention and consideration of this very important issue.

Sincerely,

---

---

---

---