**New York State Jails Justice Network**

***“More Justice – Less Jail!”***

**Fighting for justice, human rights, accountability, and community-based alternatives to incarceration in local jails throughout New York State**

**Legislative Priorities**

A5709 Gallagher/S5877 Salazar: Broaden Representation on the State Commission of Correction

 The State Commission of Correction is nominally the oversight body for jails and prisons in New York State. The long-time continuation of abuses, discrimination, intolerable and life-threatening conditions, and deaths in New York’s jails and prisons is testimony to the failure of the SCOC to monitor, oversee, report, and enforce the most minimal standards of respect for human life and dignity within corrections facilities. Some specific issues are the enforcement of arcane standards of staffing that often result in more staff than incarcerated persons; the SCOC’s insistence that small communities build large expensive new jails; and the SCOC’s practice of granting waivers allowing local jails to flaunt human rights and New York State laws, for example issuing waivers to allow jails to violate the HALT Solitary Act. This bill would change the requirements for nomination of SCOC Commissioners to include a broad range of stakeholders beyond the current and historic law enforcement personnel, including health care and mental health practitioners, formerly incarcerated individuals, and public defenders, to ensure representation of affected communities and change the culture of the board to embrace the human rights and dignity of incarcerated individuals.

A181 Jackson/A6487 Weprin: Allow state legislative staff and local legislators full access to local jails for purposes of oversight, monitoring, and reporting.

 This bill will be an avenue for greater transparency and accountability of local jails, making them more accessible to state legislators via their staffs, and accessible for the first time to the local legislators who are responsible for approving their budgets but often know little about the conditions they are approving.

A2746 Gallagher/S\_\_\_\_\_ (pending): Human rights in jails and prisons. Expands the definition of publicly-supported accommodations to include correctional facilities for purposes of the responsibility of the Division of Human Rights. Will provide an avenue for redress of discriminatory and inhumane treatment beyond the current grievance process which is often short-circuited, ignored, or dismissed by the same facilities that are the subject of the grievance.

***The Status Quo Has Got To Go!***

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