



It's time to re-examine HALT

In 2021, legislation was passed that restricted the use of segregated confinement in state and local correctional facilities in New York. Known as “HALT” (Humane Alternatives to Long-Term solitary confinement), the bill removed solitary confinement as a tool to manage some of the worst and most violent offenders in our state’s criminal justice system.

AFSCME Council 82 represents thousands of correctional officers across New York State, including State Corrections Lieutenants who help manage the 44 State Correctional facilities that are currently in operation, as well as county correctional officers in 24 of New York’s County jails. Our members are seasoned correctional staff who understand how these facilities work and who could be helpful in crafting alternatives to segregated confinement, including the use of more educational programming for inmates and alternative disciplinary strategies.

At the time that the bill was being debated, our union acknowledged that the legislation was well intentioned, but we pointed out that HALT showed a lack of understanding about the use of segregated confinement in New York’s criminal justice system. In order to maintain a safe and secure environment in the correctional system – an environment that protects both the incarcerated persons and the staff who work in these facilities – from time to time bad actors and repeat offenders simply need to be removed from the general population. This legislation has only exacerbated the ongoing problem of inmate violence by removing one of the tools of maintaining a safe correctional facility.

According to New York State DOCCS’ own numbers, there has been a 90% increase in assaults on incarcerated persons by other incarcerated persons since 2021. There has been an additional 42% increase in assaults on correctional staff since HALT was passed. County jails have experienced similar dramatic increases in assaults. These numbers cannot be ignored. It's time to re-examine HALT. Our union and its members offer to be a partner in these discussions. Ignoring the problem is not a solution.

On behalf of the more than 400,000 public and non-profit workers that AFSCME represents in New York State, including thousands of members who work in correctional facilities, our union SUPPORTS re-examining HALT.

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO
Political and Legislative Offices

Tel (518) 869-2245 Fax (518) 869-8649 212 Great Oaks Blvd., Albany, NY 12203