



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER  
BRAD LANDER

September 9, 2025

Hon. Kathy Hochul  
Governor of the State of New York  
Executive Chamber  
New York State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

**Re: Corrections Oversight Omnibus Bill**

Dear Governor Hochul,

As Chief Accountability Officer for the City of New York, I write to urge you to sign the Corrections Oversight Omnibus bill, S.8415 (Salazar) / A.8871 (Dilan), which consists of ten prison oversight and accountability bills. In particular, Section H would strengthen oversight of New York's jails and prisons by overhauling the State Commission of Correction (SCOC).

For too long, our state and local correctional facilities have been plagued by violence that endangers people in custody and the staff who serve them. We have all seen the camera footage of the brutal beating of Robert Brooks at Marcy Correctional Facility that resulted in his death. Statewide, the Correctional Association of New York reported 143 deaths in custody in 2024, compared to 107 the previous year, marking a 34% year-over-year increase, underscoring the need for stronger oversight. You have called for accountability, including the termination of the officers involved. Signing this oversight omnibus bill into law would bring needed reforms that strengthen oversight across these institutions.

The intractable crisis at Rikers Island makes this an urgent issue. With the delay of the Borough-Based Jails and population trends indicating closure will not occur by the legally mandated 2027 deadline, we must use every available tool to keep people safe while the facility remains in operation. Although Rikers is operated by the City, it is still a local correctional facility subject to the State Commission of Correction's minimum standards. These reforms would allow the Commission to exercise stronger oversight—in certifying Rikers' maximum capacity; determining the required post complement and compelling adequate staffing; conducting unannounced inspections and private interviews; obtaining records, including medical records, by subpoena; issuing corrective directives and applying to Supreme Court to compel compliance; and, as a last resort, closing a facility that remains unsafe, unsanitary, inadequate, or noncompliant. Strengthening and diversifying the SCOC under Section H would enable the State to deploy these powers immediately, in coordination with the federal remediation manager in the Nunez litigation.

To do its work effectively, the SCOC needs the capacity and expertise this bill provides. I support the Corrections Oversight Omnibus Bill, especially Section H, which would expand and diversify the SCOC so it can better fulfill its mandate. If signed into law, this provision of this larger bill would increase the number of commissioners from three to nine, strengthening the Commission's capacity while distributing appointments among the Governor, the State Senate, the State Assembly, and the Correctional Association of New York (CANY). The bill would also diversify the Commission beyond law

enforcement and corrections to include members with experience in public health, behavioral health care, indigent legal defense, prisoners' rights litigation, as well as individuals who were formerly incarcerated.

These changes would make the SCOC a stronger instrument for oversight and reform, and would help the State meet its obligations, including closing Rikers Island and addressing life-threatening conditions in jails and prisons across New York.

I respectfully urge you to sign the Corrections Oversight Omnibus bill into law to bring stability and safety to New York's jails and prisons.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Lander", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Brad Lander  
New York City Comptroller