



JONATHAN G. JACOBSON
104th District

THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
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April 17, 2020

Hon. Anthony J. Annucci
Acting Commissioner
New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision
1220 Washington Avenue, Building 2
Albany, New York 12226-2050

Re: Measures to Inhibit the Spread of COVID-19 in New York State Correctional Facilities

Dear Commissioner Annucci:

This week, Governor Cuomo announced that, in order to prevent further spread of COVID-19, all New Yorkers must wear face coverings in situations where social distancing is not possible. Some of the examples he gave of where face coverings should be worn include public transportation, stores, and sidewalks. Yet, there is another place where social distancing is never truly possible: inside of a correctional facility.

In order to have a safe environment, **both** correctional officers and inmates must be provided with masks. While previous directions have provided for correctional officers, inmates have not been included.

Since the COVID-19 health crisis emerged, our offices have been contacted by an increasing number of constituents whose loved ones are currently incarcerated. Their concern is justified. As we have seen from the infection and fatality rates at nursing homes, large institutions of any kind are particularly susceptible to a virus like COVID-19 that can be transmitted asymptotically.

Over the past few weeks, the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) has prohibited outside visitors in an attempt to shut out infection. This has not succeeded. As an increasing number of correctional officers and inmates became infected, we were pleased to learn the DOCCS began providing masks to all staff—not just those working directly with infected inmates.

For the reasons we have stated above, we are requesting that DOCCS provide masks to all inmates and share information on how it is implementing social distancing and other preventative measures within New York's Correctional facilities. This would protect not just the inmates, but also the correctional officers.

Thank you for your attention to this matter on behalf of those we serve.

Very truly yours,



ASSEMBLYMEMBER
JONATHAN G. JACOBSON (D-104)



SENATOR JEN METZGER (D-42)



ASSEMBLYMEMBER SANDY GALEF (D-95)