



OPPOSE

MEMORANDUM IN

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TO

Closure of Juvenile Justice Rehabilitation Facilities

The CSEA strongly opposes the closures of four Office for Children and Family Services (OCFS) youth facilities without the legally required one-year notice. This action will leave large areas of the state without access to OCFS services and will eliminate services for vulnerable groups.

These facilities play an important role for youths across New York. Columbia Girls Secure is the only secure facility operated specifically for girls while Red Hook Residential Center is known for its programs for LGBTQ youth. Their closure calls into question the state's commitment to providing these services to these vulnerable populations.

Two of the facilities slated for closure are the only ones serving specific geographic areas. The closure of Brentwood Residential Center would leave Long Island, and the 12 million residents that live in the greater New York City region, without any OCFS residential facilities. Goshen Secure is the closest secure facility to New York City. The next closest secure facility is two hours away, causing additional strain on families from New York City who want to visit their loved ones who are in a secure facility.

The budget proposal bypasses the legally-required one-year notice prior to closing an OCFS facility. This notice is intended to provide all parties – youths, workers, and host communities – enough time to plan for the loss of the facility. Ignoring this requirement and closing facilities on short notice disrespects the needs of all parties involved.

Lastly, these closures will wreak havoc on the OCFS workforce. While the Executive states that employees will be offered reassignments, there is no guarantee where the reassignments are or how far away they will be. Asking an employee to commute over two hours each way, which is how far Brentwood is from the next closest facility, isn't a reassignment - it is a layoff.

On behalf of 300,000 public and private, active and retired members, CSEA asks that you restore these closures to ensure that youths throughout our state have access to these vital services.

Respectfully submitted,

Fran Turner
Director