



OPPOSE

MEMORANDUM IN

OPPOSITION

TO

A.1962 – Barrett / S.5477 – Benjamin

The CSEA strongly opposes this legislation.

This bill would amend the Correction Law to make it easier for counties to eliminate staff at county correctional facilities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a unique challenge to all levels of government, including at county correctional facilities. At this time, we simply cannot say that, exclusive of COVID, the population at county jails has dropped enough to justify the elimination of staff at these facilities.

To illustrate this point, the sponsor's memo to this legislation cites a decline in the jail census to 11,259 in June 2020 as proof that county jail populations have plummeted. However, as courts have started to reopen along with the rest of the state, that census has increased every month since July 2020. As of April 2021, the jail census was at 15,655, a nearly 40% increase over July 2020 levels.

Further, counties can already manage their facilities and work forces to respond to drops in the census by closing a housing unit if beds are unoccupied.

While it may be true that the census at county correctional facilities has been in decline, it would be unwise to make permanent decisions based on any data from the COVID-19 pandemic. Putting workers out of a job as our economic recovery has only just begun will only serve to slow New York's recovery and hurt our communities.

On behalf of 300,000 active and retired, public and private sector employees, CSEA strongly urges the rejection of this legislation.

Respectfully submitted,
Fran Turner
Director