

February 15, 2025

On February 10, 2025, NYSDOCCS Commissioner Martuscello issued an internal memo to all Superintendents instructing them to reduce staffing of their Budgeted Fill items (BFL) by 30% at each facility. The memo does not mention any corresponding reduction in the size of the Commissioner's Executive team or staff. This should send off immediate alarm bells.

The commissioner has stated that he needs to review how he conducts business. There is a need to examine how DOCCS operates, starting with the Commissioner himself. It should be noted that he previously served as the Director of Personnel for DOCCS and has held various positions responsible for internal decisions. He has been involved in decision-making during several crises and has continued to receive promotions. How and why?

Commissioner Martuscello formerly held the positions of Director of Personnel (now known as Director of Human Resources), Deputy Commissioner, Executive Deputy Commissioner, Acting Commissioner, and currently, Commissioner. Despite having these policy and rulemaking roles, accountability for certain issues he made remains unclear. Questions arise regarding the downsizing of his own staff following the closure of multiple facilities, potentially to set an example. He chose to add to his own staff. Additionally, concerns about promotions and nepotism within the organization warrant further scrutiny, as suggested by information available on seethroughny.net. All his family seems untouchable as he cries for a 30% plot plan reduction of jobs that are needed to safely and humanely run each prison. Look at all those people with the same last name and in leadership positions. It screams nepotism.

I have made several complaints to Governor Hochul and also to the NY Commission on Ethics. To date, not surprisingly, I have not received a reply.

Employees, officers, supervisors, and management informed the commissioner that closing Great Meadow and Sullivan Correctional Facilities would worsen recruitment, staffing, and retention. Isn't he responsible for his own failed policies? Now he wants a 30 percent reduction due to these failures.

The Commissioner's initiative to address staffing issues overlooks significant safety concerns. His superintendents fear they will be scapegoats if violence occurs, knowing this plan, if enacted, could escalate dangers for both employees and inmates. Responsibility should not fall solely on them but also on the Commissioner. Blood will be spilled.

Imagine an auto manufacturer, already short-staffed, being asked to cut 30% of needed jobs of its staff while already needing to increase production when it had 100% of the jobs.

This could not be done safely. A CEO making such a request would be terminated. How much more challenging would this be for a prison?

This policy needs to be reconsidered, and a more rational solution developed. According to DOCCS' statistics, there were 2,070 incidents of assaults on staff in 2024. Additionally, there were 2,982 incidents of inmate-on-inmate assaults, some resulting in death. Both assault categories are an all-time record. If the commissioner cannot control violence how does this plan that diminishes manpower help curb violence?

It is important for the Commissioner to carefully evaluate this plan to prevent further violence. Can and will he do that? Governor Kathy Hochul's name is at the top of that memo. I am to think that she agrees with this ill-advised plan. If so, she will also have blood on her hands.

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