

STATE OF NEW YORK

8161

IN SENATE

January 27, 2022

Introduced by Sen. HOYLMAN -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Crime Victims, Crime and Correction

AN ACT to amend the correction law, in relation to the membership of the state commission of correction and to inspection and procedures applicable to unsafe or unsanitary correctional facilities

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Section 40 of the correction law is amended by adding a new
2 subdivision 7 to read as follows:

3 7. "Serious injury" means the same as such term is defined in section
4 fifty-one hundred two of the insurance law.

5 § 2. Section 41 of the correction law, as added by chapter 865 of the
6 laws of 1975, is amended to read as follows:

7 § 41. State commission of correction; organization. 1. (a) There shall
8 be within the executive department a state commission of correction. It
9 shall consist of [~~three~~] nine persons [~~to be~~], two of whom shall be
10 appointed by the governor [~~, by and with the advice and consent of the~~
11 ~~senate~~], two of whom shall be appointed by a majority vote of the
12 membership of the assembly, two of whom shall be appointed by a majority
13 vote of the membership of the senate, two of whom shall be appointed by
14 the attorney general, and one of whom shall be appointed by the correc-
15 tional association. All appointments shall be by and with the advice and
16 consent of the senate to ensure the requirements of this subdivision are
17 met.

18 (b) At least one member of the commission shall be a formerly incar-
19 cerated person, and a preference in appointment shall be granted to
20 nominees who have been personally affected by contact with the criminal
21 legal system. At least one member of the commission shall have a profes-
22 sional background in public health. No more than three members of the
23 commission shall have a background in law enforcement, criminal prose-
24 cution, or employment within a corrections agency, and the members of
25 the commission with such backgrounds shall never be greater than the
26 number of members of the commission with backgrounds in indigent crimi-

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 nal defense services, prisoner's rights litigation, or public legal
2 services. The remaining members of the commission shall have expertise
3 in any other field deemed useful for the promotion of an efficient,
4 humane, and lawful correctional system. The ~~[governor]~~ members of the
5 commission shall designate one of the appointed members as chairman to
6 serve ~~[as such]~~ at ~~[the]~~ their pleasure ~~[of the governor]~~. The members
7 shall devote full time to their duties and shall hold no other salaried
8 public position.

9 2. The members shall hold office for terms of five years; provided
10 that of the three members first appointed, one shall serve for a term of
11 two years, one shall serve for a term of three years and one shall serve
12 for a term of five years from January first next succeeding their
13 appointment. No member shall serve for more than ten years. Any member
14 of the commission may be removed by the governor for cause after an
15 opportunity to be heard in his or her defense.

16 3. Any member chosen to fill a vacancy created other than by expira-
17 tion of term shall be appointed for the unexpired term of the member
18 whom he or she is to succeed. Vacancies caused by expiration of term or
19 otherwise shall be filled in the same manner as original appointments;
20 provided, however, that if a position on the commission remains vacant
21 for any period longer than one hundred eighty days, the members of the
22 commission may appoint an individual to fill such vacancy whose appoint-
23 ment satisfies the requirements of paragraph (b) of subdivision one of
24 this section.

25 4. The appropriations available to pay for the expenses of the commis-
26 sion during each fiscal year shall not be less than two percentum of the
27 appropriations available to pay for the expenses of the department
28 during such fiscal year.

29 § 3. Subdivision 3 of section 45 of the correction law, as amended by
30 chapter 322 of the laws of 2021, is amended to read as follows:

31 3. Except in circumstances involving health, safety or alleged
32 violations of established standards of the commission, visit, and
33 inspect every correctional ~~[facilities]~~ facility in the state on an
34 annual basis consistent with a schedule determined by the chairman of
35 the commission~~[, taking into consideration available resources, workload~~
36 ~~and staffing]~~, and appraise the management of such correctional facili-
37 ties with specific attention to matters such as safety, security, health
38 of incarcerated individuals, sanitary conditions, rehabilitative
39 programs, disturbance and fire prevention and control preparedness, and
40 adherence to laws and regulations governing the rights of incarcerated
41 individuals. The commission shall not disclose its schedule for
42 inspections or provide advance notice to any correctional facility of a
43 planned inspection unless such notice is required to carry out the
44 duties of the commission.

45 § 4. Subdivision 4 of section 46 of the correction law, as amended by
46 chapter 322 of the laws of 2021, is amended and two new subdivisions 5
47 and 6 are added to read as follows:

48 4. In any case where any rule or regulation promulgated by the commis-
49 sion pursuant to subdivision six of section forty-five of this article
50 or the laws relating to the construction, management and affairs of any
51 correctional facility or the care, treatment and discipline of its
52 incarcerated individuals, are being or are about to be violated, the
53 commission shall immediately notify the person in charge or control of
54 the facility of such violation, recommend remedial action, and direct
55 such person to comply with the rule, regulation or law, as the case may
56 be. The commission shall also immediately notify the governor, the

1 chair and members of the assembly standing committee on correction, and
2 the chair and members of the senate standing committee on crime victims,
3 crime, and correction, of the alleged or documented violation and the
4 remedial action that the commission recommends. Upon the failure of such
5 person to comply with the rule, regulation or law the commission [~~may~~]
6 shall promptly apply to the supreme court for an order directed to such
7 person requiring compliance with such rule, regulation or law; provided,
8 however, that if the commission decides to close a facility pursuant to
9 section forty-five of this article, the commission shall not be required
10 to apply for an order. Upon such application the court [~~may~~] shall issue
11 such order as may be just and a failure to comply with the order of the
12 court shall be a contempt of court and punishable as such.

13 5. (a) In any case where there is a reasonably foreseeable risk that
14 conditions at a correctional facility might violate the constitutional
15 rights of people incarcerated there, cause imminent harm to any incar-
16 cerated person, or cause the imminent death of any incarcerated person,
17 the commission shall be required to order the closure of such correc-
18 tional facility pursuant to subdivision eight of section forty-five of
19 this article. Such correctional facility shall remain closed permanently
20 or until the commission has determined that such correctional facility
21 can resume operations in compliance with all regulations promulgated by
22 the commission and without posing any reasonably foreseeable harm to any
23 person incarcerated there. The commission shall not need to apply for a
24 court order pursuant to subdivision four of this section before deciding
25 to close a correctional facility. Failure to take action pursuant to
26 this subdivision or subdivision four of this section shall constitute
27 neglect of a ministerial matter. For the purposes of this subdivision,
28 "ministerial matter" shall have the same meaning as such term is defined
29 in paragraph (d) of subdivision one of section seventy-three of the
30 public officers law.

31 (b) Upon a recommendation made by the governor or the attorney gener-
32 al, or upon a resolution passed in the assembly or senate, or upon the
33 request of a considerable number of people incarcerated in any correc-
34 tional facility or particular wing, annex, or housing unit thereof,
35 asking the commission to inspect any correctional facility and recommend
36 remedial actions or close a correctional facility pursuant to powers
37 granted in section forty-five of this article, the commission shall
38 discuss such matter at the next stated meeting to occur after ten busi-
39 ness days, provided that such meeting occurs within forty-five days of
40 such request. The commission shall inspect the correctional facility or
41 facilities in question, collect any relevant documents, and conduct any
42 interviews of incarcerated people, staff, medical providers, and super-
43 visors at such correctional facility prior to such meeting and make the
44 result of its inspection and analysis public online before its next
45 stated meeting. Such analysis shall, at a minimum, include a description
46 of the factors contained in subdivision three of section forty-five of
47 this article. At such meeting, the commission shall determine whether,
48 based on its inspection and analysis, the correctional facility lacks
49 compliance with any law or regulation promulgated by the commission, and
50 whether such non-compliance poses an imminent harm to any incarcerated
51 person in the custody of that correctional facility. At such stated
52 meeting the commission shall state on the record the reasoning underly-
53 ing its determination to take no action, recommend remedial action,
54 apply to the supreme court for an order, or order the closure of a
55 facility.

1 6. (a) Twice per year, at intervals separated by approximately six
2 months, the commission shall publish a report containing the results of
3 its annual inspections of correctional facilities in a prominent place
4 on its website, and shall deliver a copy of such report to the governor,
5 the temporary president of the senate, the speaker of the assembly, and
6 the attorney general. Such reports shall contain, without limitation,
7 detailed information about any violations of regulations or applicable
8 laws at each correctional facility inspected, notable excerpts from
9 interviews with incarcerated people, staff, medical providers, and
10 supervisors at each facility, descriptions of deaths or serious injuries
11 that have occurred at any correctional facility that was inspected,
12 copies of recommendations or directives that have been issued by the
13 commission to any correctional facility during the period of time
14 covered by the report, and copies of any correctional facility's
15 response to such recommendations or directives.

16 (b) As soon as the commission completes an investigation of a death or
17 serious injury suffered by an incarcerated person in the custody of a
18 correctional facility, the commission shall publish on its website a
19 report containing the result of such investigation, including without
20 limitation the complete result of the commission's investigation of such
21 incident, true and correct copies of records that the commission has
22 received from such facility in connection with its investigation of such
23 incident, a determination as to whether conditions in the correctional
24 facility or the quality of medical care or supervision that the incar-
25 cerated person received were contributing factors or related to the
26 cause of death, and a list of regulations or applicable laws that may
27 have been violated in proximate relation to such incident. The commis-
28 sion shall also cause such report to be delivered to the next-of-kin or
29 authorized legal representative of such incarcerated person. Such
30 reports shall not be redacted except as otherwise required to protect
31 confidential medical records and behavioral health records in accord-
32 ance with state and federal laws, rules, and regulations.

33 (c) The commission may publish information contained in its reports,
34 data on deaths or serious injuries of incarcerated people at correction-
35 al facilities, and information on uncured violations of laws and regu-
36 lations at any correctional facility in a searchable database format on
37 its website if the commission determines that such a format will facili-
38 tate greater public access to such information.

39 (d) If, in the course of the commission's investigations or
40 inspections, the commission finds evidence of a pattern of malfeasance,
41 nonfeasance, abuse, or negligence on the part of staff or management at
42 any correctional facility, the commission shall immediately report such
43 evidence to the attorney general and the district attorney for the coun-
44 ty in which such correctional facility is located, and such evidence
45 shall be published within the reports issued by the commission pursuant
46 to paragraph (a) of this subdivision.

47 § 5. Section 43 of the correction law, as added by chapter 865 of the
48 laws of 1975, subdivisions 1 and 2 as amended by chapter 379 of the laws
49 of 1988, is amended to read as follows:

50 § 43. Correction medical review board; organization. 1. There shall be
51 within the commission a correction medical review board. It shall
52 consist of six persons to be appointed by the [~~governor~~] commissioner of
53 the department of health by and with the advice and consent of the
54 senate. In addition, the governor shall designate one of the full-time
55 members other than the chairman of the commission and the chairman of
56 the council as chairman of the board to serve as such at the pleasure of

1 the governor. Of the appointed members of the board one shall be a
2 physician duly licensed to practice in this state; one shall be a physi-
3 cian duly licensed to practice in this state and a board certified
4 forensic pathologist; one shall be a physician duly licensed to practice
5 in this state and shall be a board certified forensic psychiatrist; one
6 shall be an attorney admitted to practice in this state; two shall be
7 members appointed at large.

8 2. The six appointed members of the board shall hold office for five
9 years; provided that of the two members first appointed, after December
10 thirty-first, nineteen hundred eighty-seven who are not appointed to
11 succeed any other member of the board, one shall be appointed for a term
12 of four years and one shall be appointed for a term of five years from
13 January first next succeeding their appointment. Any appointed member
14 of the board may be removed by the governor for cause after an opportu-
15 nity to be heard in his or her defense.

16 3. Any member chosen to fill a vacancy created other than by expira-
17 tion of term shall be appointed for the unexpired term of the member
18 whom he or she is to succeed. Vacancies caused by expiration of term or
19 otherwise shall be filled in the same manner as original appointments;
20 provided, however, that if a position on the board remains vacant for
21 any period longer than one hundred eighty days, the members of the board
22 may appoint an individual to fill such vacancy whose appointment satis-
23 fies the requirements of subdivision one of this section.

24 4. The members of the board shall [~~receive no compensation for their~~
25 ~~services but each member shall be entitled to receive his actual and~~
26 ~~necessary expenses incurred in the performance of his duties~~] devote
27 full-time to their duties and shall hold no other salaried public posi-
28 tion.

29 § 6. Section 47 of the correction law, as amended by chapter 322 of
30 the laws of 2021, is amended to read as follows:

31 § 47. Functions, powers and duties of the board. 1. The board shall
32 have the following functions, powers and duties:

33 (a) Investigate and review the cause and circumstances surrounding the
34 death or serious injury of any incarcerated individual of a correctional
35 facility.

36 (b) Visit and inspect any correctional facility wherein an incarcerat-
37 ed individual has died or suffered a serious injury.

38 (c) Cause the body of the deceased to undergo such examinations,
39 including an autopsy, as in the opinion of the board, are necessary to
40 determine the cause of death, irrespective of whether any such examina-
41 tion or autopsy shall have previously been performed.

42 (d) Upon review of the cause of death or serious injury and circum-
43 stances surrounding the death or serious injury of any incarcerated
44 individual, the board shall submit its report thereon to the commission
45 and to the governor, the chairman of the assembly committee on
46 correction and the chairman of the senate committee on crime victims,
47 crime and correction and, where appropriate, make recommendations to
48 prevent the recurrence of such deaths or serious injuries to the commis-
49 sion and the administrator of the appropriate correctional facility. The
50 report provided to the governor, the chairman of the assembly committee
51 on correction and the chairman of the senate committee on crime victims,
52 crime and correction shall not be redacted except as otherwise required
53 to protect confidential medical records and behavioral health records in
54 accordance with state and federal laws, rules, and regulations.

55 (e) (i) Investigate and report to the commission on the condition of
56 systems for the delivery of medical care to incarcerated individuals of

1 correctional facilities and where appropriate recommend such changes as
2 it shall deem necessary and proper to improve the quality and availabil-
3 ity of such medical care.

4 (ii) The board shall be responsive to inquiries from the next of kin
5 and other person designated as a representative of any incarcerated
6 individual whose death or serious injury takes place during custody in a
7 state correctional facility regarding the circumstances surrounding the
8 death or serious injury of such incarcerated individual. Contact infor-
9 mation for the next of kin and designated representative shall be
10 provided by the department to the board from the emergency contact
11 information previously provided by the incarcerated individual to the
12 department.

13 2. Every administrator of a correctional facility shall immediately
14 report to the board the death or serious injury of an incarcerated indi-
15 vidual of any such facility in such manner and form as the board shall
16 prescribe, together with an autopsy report, or in cases of serious inju-
17 ry a physician's report.

18 § 7. This act shall take effect immediately.