

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3214

January 10, 2018

Acting Commissioner Anthony J. Annucci
New York State Department of Corrections
1220 Washington Ave
Albany, New York 12226-2050

Commissioner Cynthia Brann
New York City Department of Correction
75-20 Astoria Blvd.
East Elmhurst, NY 11370

Dear Commissioner Brann and Acting Commissioner Annucci,

I would like to express my serious concerns with your departments' newly implemented restrictions on packages sent to inmates. As an opponent of tarnishing our justice system with perverse profit incentives-and as a supporter of providing offenders with opportunities for true contrition and rehabilitation, I believe these new rules undermine the department's mission to provide for successful re-entry for inmates.

One of the most important ways for inmates to prepare for re-entry into society is through self-guided education. For many inmates, incarceration provides a critical opportunity to reassess their lives and make thoughtful determinations about their future. The city has long understood the critical role ample access to books plays in this development. Capitalizing on inmates as a captive audience is not only demoralizing, it runs counter to the goal of preparing convicts for successful re-entry into society. While I understand the importance of limiting contraband in our prisons, I believe there are better ways to ensure the safety of inmates and employees that do not restrict deliveries of material that is beneficial to inmates' futures.

I hope you will review this policy in order to address the concerns many New Yorkers have expressed. We all believe those who have broken the law must serve their sentence. But a better, fairer justice system is one that focuses not solely on retribution and punishment, but also on rehabilitation, redirection, and preparation for rejoining society as productive citizens. Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to working with you toward improving our corrections system.

Sincerely,


Joseph Crowley
Member of Congress