

New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision

Senate Hearing on Correctional Industries (Corcraft)

February 12, 2024

Testimony of Daniel F. Martuscello III, Acting Commissioner

Good morning, Chairs Salazar, Skoufis, Cooney, Senator Myrie, and other distinguished members of the Legislature, I am Daniel F. Martuscello III, the Acting Commissioner for the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, and I am joined by Deputy Commissioner Osbourne McKay. It is my honor to discuss some of the ways that the Correctional Industries program, more commonly known as Corcraft, contributes to the Department's overall mission and the corresponding value provided to both the incarcerated population and all New York State residents.

The Department is charged with the care of approximately 32,750 incarcerated individuals. Central to the Department's mission is to provide a continuity of appropriate treatment services to address the populations needs so that they are prepared for release. The provision of programs is a vital component in the rehabilitation process. Corcraft is one of the many tools the Department utilizes to fulfill this goal.

Correctional Industries was originally started at Auburn Correctional Facility in 1824 to produce items that the facility required to function. Since that time, it has evolved into a comprehensive job training program where participants develop the requisite hard and soft skills suited to today's job market. Corcraft currently operates 38 programs in 27 correctional facilities, offering programming to approximately 1,250 incarcerated individuals, and employs approximately 230 civilian staff.

Correctional Industries is comprised of four program areas: manufacturing, abatement, resource recovery consisting of recycling and composting, and call centers through a partnership with the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles to assist members of the general public. Manufacturing represents the largest aspect of the organization and operates in both maximum and medium security institutions. In addition, we operate our own distribution network to deliver products throughout the state.

Corcraft is designated in state law as a preferred source provider, in addition to the New York State Industries for the Disabled and the New York State Preferred Source Program for New Yorkers Who are Blind. The preferred source program was established to advance special social and economic goals. Our customers are not only reducing administrative costs, but they are making an investment in public safety by supporting program participants and their personal and professional development.

Incarcerated individuals who meet minimum eligibility standards can voluntarily apply to the program, which provides real-life experience by offering a standard work schedule and training to produce high quality items, work as part of a team, and enhance job skills. Correctional Industries employs formerly incarcerated individuals who participated in the program. These individuals demonstrate the benefit of the program to current participants and regularly speak to the population about how it changed their lives in a positive way. Additionally, Corcraft has proven to have a beneficial impact on recidivism. Among 2020 releases from custody, successful participants were less likely to be re-incarcerated than those who did not participate or those who were removed from the program.

Incarcerated individuals who participate in select Corcraft programs are eligible for a Limited Credit Time Allowance, which reduces their sentence by 6 months. Examples include receiving certification as an Optician from the American Board of Opticianry and receiving an asbestos handling certificate from the Department of Labor. In addition to the benefit of a sentence reduction, these individuals reenter the community with an industry recognized credential.

Two years ago, Governor Hochul announced her Jails to Jobs initiative – an effort to improve re-entry into the workforce and reduce recidivism through education, resources, and job placement. Corcraft is actively engaging with employers in the community to connect participants with employment opportunities. As such, the program is advancing the Governor’s Jails to Jobs initiative by equipping the incarcerated population with the skills needed to secure employment upon their release.

Corcraft continues to serve as a valuable asset to the incarcerated population, the Department, and the State. The use of preferred sources streamlines the procurement

process, saves taxpayer dollars, and provides quality items to government agencies and non-profit organizations. The revenue generated from sales is used exclusively to operate the program and invest in equipment and training, which directly benefits the program participants. The Correctional Industries program not only represents a smart use of public funds, but it serves as a meaningful investment in reducing the future tax burden by sending an individual back to their community with a better chance for success than when they entered the system.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I would be happy to address any questions you may have.