


Dear BOC Members,

My name is Stephanie Clark and I am 54 years old. I have been held in New York City's jails on and off about 13 times over the last 30 years. The last time was around 2002.

I am very concerned about the BOC's proposal to increase the number of people in the dorms and lower the amount of space. Even as things are now, the dorms are unsafe places. I never felt safe because there are so many predators. In the dorms, you are either predator or prey. I saw a lot of fighting. I saw corrections officers fighting people. I saw a lot of people's possessions getting stolen. The crowding makes people fussy and tense, and they fight over the slightest thing. You don't get to move from the dorms very much, and just staying in the same crowded room all day makes people antsy. I remember there were always problems getting sanitary napkins, and people would argue and fight over them. There also weren't enough phones, and people would fight over the phones. The guards let inmates decide who could and couldn't use the phone. If there are more people and less space, all of these tensions will just get worse and there will be more fights. The BOC shouldn't make it even more unsafe than it already is.

There are a lot of other problems in the jails that I think need to be fixed. The food took a long time to get to us because they brought it to the dorms instead of letting us go to the mess hall, so a lot of times it was cold. There were problems with ventilation. It was really cold in the winter and really hot in the summer. A few times I saw women almost pass out because it was so hot. There also need to be more activities. If there was more to do, people wouldn't get as tense. There wasn't a good library. You couldn't get books. And you can't get GED classes unless you go upstate. Only adolescents get that. The corrections officers also treated us with disrespect. They curse at people and are not professional. Some of the male officers have sexual relations with some of the females, and you see them getting special treatment. They also don't let you see a doctor soon enough when you are sick. You could feel like you are dying and they tell you they will put you on the list for the next day. There was one time that I felt very ill and the officers wouldn't let me go to the infirmary and kept giving me a hard time. I didn't get to go until my mom called the warden's office. The BOC should think about how to fix these problems.


Stephanie Clark
Interviewed by Olga Akselrod 4/9/07

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