

THE QUEENS VILLAGE CIVIC ASSOCIATION , INC.
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We Don't Complain About Problems—We Work On Solutions

July 15, 2015

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, N.Y. 12224

Re: Juvenile Prison at 207-01 Jamaica Ave., Queens Village, NY

Dear Governor Cuomo:

We are cognizant that you signed the "Close to Home" legislation as part of the 2012-2013 New York State Budget. We think that the "Close to Home" law enacted 2012 is a good concept and we are not against trying to reform youth from the inner city closer to home. We hope that it will be successful. In theory, youths with criminal backgrounds may benefit in a program that is closer to home where they can be visited by their parents more frequently. It might be beneficial to both the parent and the youth because the parent won't have to drive 200 to 300 miles which will make more frequent visits possible. However, the theory that this helps to reform these youth has not yet been proven. Perhaps, a few youths can be saved, but the Queens Village Community does not want to be an experimental community for young juveniles with criminal records. We do not think that a residential community is the best place for young juveniles with criminal records.

As citizens and voters, the Queens Village Community is kindly requesting that you re-examine the former Merrick Academy Charter School located at 207-01 Jamaica Ave. as choice for a young juvenile prison. First, and foremost, the Queens Village Community was not informed about this decision. The 105 precinct which service this area was also not informed. Second, **according to the ACS on June 22nd, only thirty percent or less of the young juvenile criminals for the proposed prison at this location comes from Queens.** In addition, there is no protocol to inform the general public, police or Queens Village Civic Association in case of an emergency.

We strongly urge you to **consider an alternative placement of these young juvenile offenders.** Our fundamental concern is that **this facility should not be placed in a residential setting.** There should be a buffer zone setting. The youths should have adequate space for exercise and there should be ample space parking for the guest and workers. We are seeking your immediate intervention and request that ACS relocate this Limited Secure Facility to an area that can better accommodate this facility that is more appropriate and better suited to oversee the complexities involved with a prison. At the Merrick Academy Charter School, 207-01 Jamaica Ave, NY location, there are not enough available parking spaces for visitors and staff, no adequate space for

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Gabreilla Krill, Trustee
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these youths to be able to exercise, nor adequate space away from the residential homes within the community.

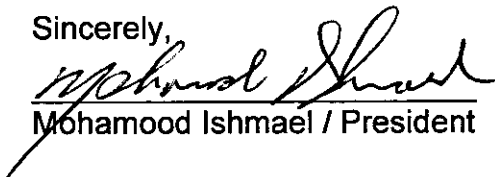
Although the community already has many group homes, just a few blocks away, there is also a proposed homeless shelter that will house approximately 70 homeless people. Our community is already saturated with these types of facilities. We are in need of preschools, youth centers, senior centers, and nursing homes that can positively encourage the growth of our next generation or aid our elderly population. In fact a youth center may be a better alternative than a prison. Our quality of life and businesses will suffer if government continues to create institutions of this kind in our community. This will only have a severe negative impact in a viable, promising community. This letter comes to you on behalf of the Queens Village Community, our children, elderly and disabled persons, families, future generations, business owners/renters, and teachers.

Attached you will see several hundred petitions signed by members, workers and concerned citizens of the community.

The Queens Village Community acknowledges the great works you have done thus far and thank you for your service. **We seek your help** during this time of need, that you will take **immediate action to STOP the opening of this PRISON in our already oversaturated community.**

Thank you in advance for your attention and prompt consideration in this urgent and ongoing matter.

Sincerely,



Mohamood Ishmael / President

cc: Mayor Bill de Blasio
Public Advocate Letitia A. James
Comptroller Scott M. Stringer
Queens Borough President Melinda R. Katz
State Senator Leroy G. Comrie, Jr.
Assemblywoman Barbara Clarke
City Council Member Daneek Miller
Mark Weprin, Deputy Secretary for Legislative Affairs for Gov. Cuomo