



**CORRECTION OFFICERS' BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION, INC.**  
"PATROLLING THE TOUGHEST PRECINCTS IN NEW YORK"

# Press Release

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## **COBA CALLS FOR AN IMMEDIATE INVESTIGATION INTO THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT ALLOWED AN INMATE WHO ASSAULTED A CO TO BE BAILED OUT INSTEAD OF BEING RE-ARRESTED**

NEW YORK - Following the shocking bailout of Rickeem Parker, whose violent assault against a New York City Correction Officer at Rikers Island, which was all caught on video, COBA President Elias Husamudeen issued the following statement:

"If there was ever direct evidence that inmates who assault Correction Officers are being given a free pass by Mayor de Blasio, the bailout of Rickeem Parker clearly proves that is the case. It is outrageous that the New York City Department of Correction would fail to re-arrest this inmate and even more shocking that they allowed him to be bailed out and placed back on the streets where he can continue his criminal history of committing acts of violence. We can only come to the conclusion that the RFK Foundation has cut a deal with City Hall just like all the other inmate advocacy groups and has been given free reign to bail out inmates regardless if they assault a Correction Officer or pose a threat to the public.

Therefore, we are immediately calling for the City Council and the Department of Investigation to launch an investigation into the circumstances that permitted this travesty of justice. We are calling for the Department of Correction to immediately release every communication with City Hall concerning the RFK bail outs. And we are calling on members of the media to dig into any and all contributions the RFK Foundation has made to Mayor de Blasio. There is no doubt in our minds that this Administration has colluded with groups who facilitate attacks on law enforcement officers such as Correction Officers.

The pattern is clear. At the direction of inmate advocacy groups, the Mayor eliminated punitive segregation for violent inmates ages 21 and under. He then appointed to the Board of Correction these same advocates who also donate to his campaigns. And most recently, he has sent our officers into a ticking time bomb at Horizon, tying our hands behind our backs, denying us the tools we need to maintain safety and security such as pepper spray, and has sent a message to the inmates there that there will be no consequences for assaulting a Correction Officer or even assaulting over 50 Correction Officers, as well as a teacher and a pharmacist.

When Horizon officially opened on October 1st the Mayor said,

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*“This is an historic moment for criminal justice reform and another step toward replacing Rikers Island with smaller, safer, more humane facilities that are closer to communities and loved ones.”*

In light of the past month, after more than 327 incidents, does he still believe Horizon is a more “humane” facility? Or is it only humane if violent assailants are safe regardless of the safety of the officers who are putting their lives on the line there every single day?

The pattern of looking the other way while inmates assault Correction Officers with impunity is also evident in the shameless attempts by both ACS and DOC to trivialize the injuries sustained by over 50 Correction Officers since the opening of Horizon. In response to these melees, one of which resulted in a CO having his nose broken, both ACS and DOC issued the following identical statements:

*“We are in a transitional period for a historic reform that’s never been done before and there have been some incidents involving youth and officers, which were quickly addressed. None of the injuries were serious, but we take these and all incidents seriously.”*

The fact is if the administration truly took these assaults seriously, they wouldn’t continue to allow inmates to assault Correction Officers at Horizon without any consequences.

To date, no inmate at Horizon has been re-arrested, infraacted, or received any disciplinary sanctions for their crimes of assault committed against Correction Officers working at Horizon. This is in spite of the fact that there have been 87 Use of Forces and 18 outright assaults against COs since the facility opened with a Correction Officer knocked unconscious in one incident.

Correction Officers deserve better. And both Correction Officers and the public deserve to know if their Mayor is being paid to give the assailants of Correction Officers a free pass.”

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