



New York State
**PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
FEDERATION AFL-CIO**

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USA Today

To the Editor:

There is no arguing New York's juvenile justice system is in need of repair, but your story "Youth prison system under pressure" Feb. 2, fails to point out several important facts about what is working. The New York State Public Employees Federation (PEF) represents the teachers, youth counselors and medical and mental health care professionals at the state Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) facilities. Our members have dedicated their careers to helping troubled youths become productive members of society.

We support the governor's proposal to add medical and mental health services and improve staff to resident ratios. We also support a more therapeutic model of rehabilitation which is currently taking place at facilities across the state.

Youths, many of them now OCFS residents after committing serious crimes including assaults, robberies and burglaries are being educated and learning new life skills. They attend academic classes and physical education class and many are obtaining their GED's and continuing their education. These are the stories that have gone untold. OCFS facilities provide opportunities for youths who have done wrong things to start doing right things. There are many of these true stories your paper and others could tell with very little effort.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Brynien
President, NYS Public Employees Federation

