



The Fortune Society
David Rothenberg Center for Public Policy
Building People, Not Prisons

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October 29, 2009
Memorandum in Support

A. 6665 (Gottfried) S. 4495 (Duane)

An Act to amend the public health law, the education law and the labor law, in relation to prohibiting participation in torture and improper treatment of prisoners by health care professionals.

The Fortune Society strongly supports A.6665/S.4495 amending the public health law prohibiting participation in torture and mistreatment of prisoners by health care professionals in or outside of New York State.

For more than four decades, The Fortune Society (Fortune) has helped hundreds of thousands of men and women with criminal justice involvement transform and rebuild their lives. As one of the nation's most distinguished reentry service organizations, Fortune provides formerly incarcerated individuals, and others who have criminal records, with myriad services designed to help our clients develop the skills they need to break the cycle of crime and incarceration. In doing so, we help them build productive lives, which simultaneously strengthens individuals, families, and entire communities.

Fortune utilizes a holistic, one-stop service model, offering lifelong wrap-around services – most under one roof at our Long Island City facility, in the Borough of Queens. Among our myriad programs are: Alternative to Incarceration, Career Development, Discharge Planning, Drop-In Services, Education, Family Services, Health Services, Housing Services, Substance Abuse Treatment, and Public Policy and Advocacy.

A major recommendation proposed in A.6665/S.4495 is the need to establish general obligations of health care professionals in relation to the treatment of incarcerated and detained persons, consistent with generally applicable legal, health and professional standards. Given Fortune's long and active history of collaborating with advocates, policy experts and government entities to develop sound reentry policy objectives, we strongly encourage the passage of this bill to eliminate the involvement of health care professionals in the commission of torture.

As a nationally recognized service and advocacy organization working on behalf of people involved in the criminal justice system, Fortune has an ethical obligation to protect this population against torture and other cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment. I am available to answer any questions you might have. Please feel free to call me at (347) 510-3607.

Sincerely,

Glenn E. Martin
Vice President of Development and Public Affairs