

I am a resident of NYC and I am contacting the Board of Corrections about the proposed mail ban on Rikers Island and within other borough jails. The Board of Corrections must reject this cruel ban, or they become complicit in making a bad situation worse.

Instead of making anyone on Rikers safer, this ban expands and intensifies violent surveillance, undermines access to community resources, and further isolates people from their loved ones.

1. The state's own Department of Investigation reports drugs are brought onto Rikers Island overwhelmingly through correctional officers and contractors.
2. Switching to tablets excludes people with literacy issues, certain sensory access needs, and screen use limitations from accessing mail.
3. Scanning mail creates further delays, produces partial, incomplete or illegible copies, and destroys physical correspondence which people rely on to survive and sustain connections with their loved ones.
4. People often receive life-saving packages from their loved ones outside - getting rid not only of mail but also of packages does absolutely NOTHING to address the root causes of precarity and harm on Rikers, which is the institution of imprisonment itself.
5. Securus, the proposed vendor, has a long track record of mass leaks of confidential information and contract violations. The contract dramatically expands the surveillance dragnet and charges prisoners and their loved ones for basic necessities, including the ability to communicate with those they care about.

The board's own Executive Director, Amanda Masters, has already resigned because of Commissioner Molina's resistance to oversight. If the BOC has any real interest in people's safety, they must ensure that the Department of Corrections abandon this punitive ban.