



Report from Olympia No. 4

Teamsters Local 117

News for DOC Teamsters - 2012 Legislative Session in Olympia

January 27, 2012



Teamsters Local 117: 14675 Interurban Ave. S, Suite 307 • Tukwila, WA 98168 (206) 441-4860 • www.teamsters117.org

Uniform bill exe'd out of committee!

HB 2346 receives unanimous support



DOC Teamsters turn out to support HB 2346, the officers' uniform bill.

It was an impressive show of force. Teamster correctional employees from across the State, along with representatives of the Sheriffs, State Patrol, Firefighters and State Labor Council, packed into a cramped hearing room on Friday to voice their support of HB 2346, a bill that would exempt officers from wearing uniforms made by inmates.

TEAMSTERS FROM ACROSS THE STATE

The bill was heard by the Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Committee, a group of 11 legislators, with Representative Christopher Hurst (D – 31st District) as its chair.

Members of Local 117 travelled from Larch, Shelton, Stafford Creek, Walla Walla, Monroe, and Clallam Bay to attend

the hearing. In fact, there were so many Teamsters who signed up to testify in support of the bill that the Committee Chair had to condense their remarks.

A QUESTION OF MORALE

The bill's prime sponsor, Maureen Walsh (R- 16th District), testified in support, as did co-sponsor Representative Kirk Pearson (R – 39th District). Local 117 Secretary-Treasurer, Tracey A. Thompson, testified on behalf of the Union:

"Uniforms worn by staff have a psychological impact on the offenders that they are supervising. Unkempt, unprofessional uniforms suggest complacency and complacency is an invitation to violence," she said.

Officer Greg Bellamy, a Shop Steward at

CBCC, stated that a change to the current system would help staff morale. "We had a rough year in 2011 - we lost an officer. Maybe this will help with the healing process."

Some had come to Olympia for the first time to take part in the legislative process, including Officer Eli Vinje of MCC. "For our safety and security we should have better quality uniforms. A lot of times they rip, they don't fit well and are not tailored properly. They need to be more professional, especially with us protecting the community and the public," he said.

TEAMSTERS POLITICAL ACTION

The bill drew an impressive number of supporters. This was due in large part to the tireless work of the Teamsters political action team: Local 117 Lobbyist, Teresita Torres, and Political Action Coordinator, Lily Wilson-Codega. Teresita has been on the ground in Olympia every day since the start of session, speaking with legislators and advocating on behalf of Teamsters at DOC, while Lily has been busy mobilizing members to provide testimony, lobbying, and advocacy support.

Today's hearing was an unqualified success. Legislators acted quickly to move the bill out of their committee. As soon as the bill is reassigned, we will let you know. In the meantime, you can show your support for the bill by calling the legislative hotline in Olympia at 1-800-562-6000 and telling your representatives to pass the officers' uniform bill - HB 2346.