



# TEAMSTERS LOCAL UNION 117

Affiliated with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters

General Public and Private Sector Employees and Special Services Employees in King and Pierce Counties and Employees of the State of Washington

October 31, 2019

Ms. Julie Moultime, Labor Relations Manager  
Department of Corrections  
PO Box 41105  
Olympia, WA 98504-1105

Via E-Mail Transmittal Only  
teamsters117@doc1.wa.gov - 3101

**Re: All Bargaining Unit Members – Safety and Health  
Grievance No. 77-19 (Statewide)  
Step 1 (Panel Grievance)**

Dear Ms. Moultime:

A grievance has been filed through the Union office as follows:

The Union protests the agency's inadequate and unsafe staffing levels established by the Department of Corrections for all members of the Teamsters' bargaining unit. In accordance with Section 9.1(E) (2), the Union hereby provides the following information relating to this grievance:

- a. The action referenced above constitutes a violation of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) including, but not limited to, Article 13 [Safety and Health]. The Department of Correction's staffing model has not been revised in over thirty (30) years. Since then, the Department's average inmate population has increased by sixty-three percent (63%). Correctional operations and practices have also evolved tremendously. The Department has reformed and updated its security practices in response to serious security incidents to include the murder of an employee and assaults on staff. Additionally, operational changes have been made to meet the increased mental health needs of the inmate population, to reduce the use of solitary confinement and restrictive housing, and to provide programs and services to better prepare incarcerated individuals to reenter society. All of these changes have increased staff workloads and expectations. In June of 2019, as the result of an independent review of the Washington State Department of Corrections staffing model, CGL Companies produced a report titled *Washington Department of Corrections Prison Staffing Model Review*. In reviewing the report, the following is a sampling of the findings:
  - During Fiscal Year 2018, it recorded over 745,000 hours of overtime in the system, which is excessive for a system of this size and expensive (p.1).
  - Finding – Areas with Critical Staffing Needs: As part of our study, CGL reviewed all aspects of custody operations and found critical staffing shortages in several areas (p. 2).

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- Adequately staffing correctional facilities has a direct impact on overtime expenditures. Excessive overtime in any organization is often an indicator of understaffing and can have a negative impact on its overall operation. We know that the economic costs of overtime are high because it is usually paid at least at a fifty percent (50%) premium over straight time. But there are also intangible costs associated with excessive overtime. Studies have shown that excessive overtime can lead to increases in absenteeism and use of leave time, thus creating a cycle where use of overtime creates the need for more overtime. Additionally, overtime has been shown to increase fatigue that can reduce an employee's productivity and attentiveness while at the same time increasing their risk for on-the-job injuries (p. 27).
- CGL found a number of areas where the staffing model critically under-prescribes the number of custody staff needed (p.42).
- To improve the accuracy in the development of custody staffing needs, the DOC should conduct individualized staffing assessments at each of its correctional facilities (p. 49).

The Union asserts the Department is in violation of the parties CBA when it fails to provide adequate staff according to accepted safety practices and legitimate safety concerns raised by the Union and employees. We stand ready to provide you with additional facts supporting the Union's position.

- b. The violation is ongoing.
- c. The Union attempted to resolve this grievance informally by speaking with Assistant Secretary Rob Herzog, yet no resolution could be reached.
- d. The Union requests a full make-whole remedy, including:
  - Immediately correcting the inadequate relief factor identified by CGL; and
  - Implementing the hiring suggestions contained in the CGL report; and
  - Conducting individualized staffing assessments at each of the correctional facilities per CGL's recommendation to include all classifications represented by Teamsters Local 117; and
  - Utilizing the CGL report as a model when establishing additional positions from the agency budget either as, FTE or project positions; and
  - Any other relief that is just and equitable.
- e. I will be the Union Representative for this grievance. Please direct all correspondence regarding this grievance to me at the Union Headquarters office with a copy to the grievant and Shop Steward(s) listed below.
- f. The Union Representative's signature (or signature on behalf of the Union Representative) appears below.

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The Union hopes that this matter can be discussed and settled on an informal basis. With this in mind, we would appreciate hearing from you, as soon as possible, to arrange a suitable meeting for a proper review of this issue.

Sincerely,



Michelle Woodrow  
President and Executive Director

MW:ms

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cc: All Teamsters Bargaining Unit Members