



TEAMSTERS LOCAL 117

# The Guardian

News from the hardworking men and women of DOC

Volume VII No. 4 - Fall 2014

Teamsters Local 117: 14675 Interurban Ave. S, Suite 307 • Tukwila, WA 98168 • 1-888-872-3489 • [www.teamsters117.org](http://www.teamsters117.org)

## BARGAINING COMMITTEE - JOINT STATEMENT

*DOC bargaining committee speaks out on interest arbitration decision*



***The following statement was written by Joshua Reyes, a Shop Steward at CBCC, on behalf of all of the members of the DOC bargaining committee.***

Since the start of negotiations for the 2015-2017 contract, there has been a rollercoaster of emotional responses toward the intent of the bargaining team and the Teamsters 117 leadership regarding its rank-and-file members. We, the bargaining team, were made aware of many issues needing to be addressed in the new contract. However, two issues that seemed unanimous were that we were tired of the Washington State Government and the Department of Corrections balancing the budget on the backs of state workers and that we were grossly underpaid.

With this said, the bargaining committee took a strong approach at standing toe to toe with the state's bargaining team. Our "pipe dream" was not to be forced to push anything toward interest arbitration but that the state would finally recognize the hard work that prison employees perform daily and reward us comparably to our counterparts. However,

we knew this would not happen under normal circumstances as we have gone down this road before. Therefore, unanimously, we decided to push the state's best and final offer of three percent back across the table and use the MOU (memo of understanding) interest arbitration for two reasons. One was the stern refusal of the state's bargaining team to renew the interest arbitration MOU regardless of whether or not the best and final proposal was accepted. Second was the hope that bringing our case to a third party individual in a thorough manner would exemplify what is to be a prison worker and would show that what the state was offering was ridiculous.

In addition, the bargaining committee wanted to rectify a wrong that was brought to our attention by many rank-and-file members regarding the disparity in pay between facilities. If we were to ask each individual at each facility why they felt

they should receive or continue to receive what the state originally called recruitment and retention pay but changed to location pay, each individual would have similarly valid reasons. However, we, the bargaining committee felt that this has been a thorn in the side of solidarity and sought toward a resolution that would benefit the membership as a whole and not just be aimed at one or two classifications. We sought a prison premium which would replace the location pay but yet be extended to the entire rank-and-file membership. Either way the end goal was to bring everyone to the same equal playing field.

By involving the arbitrator we knew we were taking a risk but felt it was necessary. We examined all of our options and believed that we had to consider the whole rather than the few. We asked for much more through interest arbitration, but the arbitrator had a requirement of adhering to an award that he believed was feasibly attainable. This award was determined through his interpretation of the facts and testimonies provided during the entire arbitration process and the union could not contest his decision regardless of our opinion.

On a separate but equally important note, it is evident that through the use of social media, rather than standing united against the State of Washington and the Department of Corrections, we are engaging in arguments between each other and tearing each other down. Solidarity is important for any group to succeed in creating change and change does not happen at the wave of a wand. Solidarity should not be compromised because of a disagreement over the legitimate feelings of others. Rather

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## A message from your Director of Corrections



Michelle Woodrow

### A HERO'S SACRIFICE

Brothers and Sisters:

With the holidays on the way, I am reminded again of the incredible sacrifice our corrections' family makes to keep all of us safe. Beyond the day-to-day risks you take just by reporting to work, many of you will miss celebrations with your loved ones this year because you are required to be on duty.

Unlike the vast majority of workplaces, the prisons never close.

This sacrifice extends throughout the year, when many of you will have to miss, not only Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner, but other family events - an anniversary, your daughter's birthday, or your son's football game.

As a member of a military family, with both my son and husband on active duty, and twenty years of service in public safety, I know how difficult this sacrifice can be. As a society, we do not do nearly enough to honor the brave men and women who devote their lives to protecting the public. This is particularly true with corrections. The public simply does not want to know what goes on beyond prison walls.

It is especially frustrating when the Department itself does not honor your sacrifice. At 3% over two years, the State's final economic position in bargaining was a disgrace. Even the arbitrator's recent interest arbitration award, though considerably more, does not come close to recognizing the inherent dangers of your work, the risks and challenges you face every day, and the toll corrections work takes on you and your family.

That is why we must continue to educate the public, especially our elected officials, about what it is like to work inside a prison. While the arbitrator's award may not be everything we had hoped for, it is an important starting point in a conversation with our representatives in Olympia. Collectively, we need to speak out to ensure that our legislators not only fund our award, but come to understand that the men and women in corrections deserve more for their sacrifice than the State could ever know.

Thank you for your service and stay safe.

Respectfully,

Michelle Woodrow  
Director of Corrections & Law Enforcement

## BARGAINING COMMITTEE

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solidarity should become stronger because we bring our own individuality to the table.

We need to regroup and re-aim our focus, anger, frustration, and disappointment toward those that can facilitate change. We need to let our voices be heard louder than ever.

We hope that this clarifies some questions and reiterates the importance of strengthening our solidarity across the state. We're not just individuals who work in different job classifications, custody or non-custody. But rather we are a family who work in the same mentally and physically demanding dangerous environment. May we act like it and be united.

Sandra Conner (AHCC, ARNP)

Amber Bates (CBCC, CC2)

Joschue Reyes (CBCC, CO2)

Jessica Anderson (CCCC, AA3)

Levi Dean (CRCC, CO2)

Corey McCloud (CRCC, MM4)

Doug Beatty (MCC, CO2)

Shane Zey (MCC, CO2)

James Palmer (MCC, CO3)

Pam Olekas (OCC, Corr. Records Supervisor)

Ronnie Matsen (SCCC, CO3)

Sally Thiessen (SCCC, CIS2)

Eric Smith (WCC, CO3)

Talisa Boad (WCCW, CO2)

Eric Burt (WSP, CC2)

Paul Moore (WSP, RN2)

Justin Riley (WSP, CO2)

### 22nd Annual Teamsters Local 117



### BLOOD DRIVE

November 15, 2014

8 A.M. to 2 P.M.

14675 Interurban Ave S.

It is that time of year for our Teamsters 117 annual Blood Drive! The event will be held on Saturday, November 15 at the Union hall in Tukwila (14675 Interurban Ave. S) from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

ALL DONORS will receive a \$25 Safeway gift card! So bring your family, co-workers, and friends!

If you don't live in the area - have no fear! Any donation made between November 8 and November 22 will be rewarded with a \$25 Safeway gift card as well (just mail in the proof of donation to the Union Hall).

**Thank you for giving the gift of life! ●**

By Spencer Thal, Local 117 General Counsel

## INTEREST ARBITRATION AWARD: Q & A

### How did your Union gain the right to go to interest arbitration?

A: Several years ago, your Union identified interest arbitration as the best way to improve wages and working conditions for DOC employees. We spent years of lobbying and intense political action to move the Washington State legislature to adopt an interest arbitration law covering DOC employees. Although we have not yet succeeded in achieving that goal, Governor Inslee granted your interest arbitration rights for the current collective bargaining cycle through an agreement.

### Why did your Union exercise its interest arbitration rights this contract cycle?

A: In bargaining, the State's last economic proposal was unacceptable to your Union bargaining committee. The committee unanimously recommended that DOC employees reject the State's proposal and vote no on their contract. The membership overwhelmingly rejected the State's final offer on a vote of 3043 to 46.

### What was the State's economic position in interest arbitration?

A: The State proposed a 3% general wage increase in the first year of the biennium and no other general wage increase. The 3% proposal had an estimated cost of \$20 million.

### What was your Union's economic position?

A: Your Union's economic proposal was estimated to cost at least \$124 million across the biennium. We proposed a 17% increase for all represented DOC employees across the two years along with proposals to catch up employees in classifications earning less than their counterparts performing similar work in other jurisdictions.

### Did anything change after the parties went to interest arbitration?

A: Yes. The State offered general government employees a 3% general wage increase in year one and a 1.8% increase in year two.

### What did the arbitrator decide regarding wage increases for DOC employees?

A: The arbitrator awarded a 5.5% wage

increase in the first year effective July 1, 2015 and a 4.3% wage increase in the second year effective July 1, 2016 at a cost of \$53.5 million. These increases apply to both custody and non-custody staff. This compares to DOC's 3% proposal, which is valued at \$20 million. He also increased sergeant's pay by one range (2.5%), adopted the union's proposal for all nurses to receive supplemental shift premium, and doubled the on-call pay for certain health care professionals from \$25 to \$50 per day.

### What did the arbitrator decide regarding location pay?

A: The arbitrator tentatively eliminated location pay but gives the employer the discretion to retain it to address ongoing recruitment and retention problems.

How much is location pay and who currently receives it?

A: Members at three facilities (CRCC, MCC, and WSP) are currently receiving some form of location pay.

- CRCC: Classification counselors 1, 2, 3 receive 2.5%; Custody officers 1, 2, 3 receive 5%
- MCC: Classification counselors 1, 2, 3 (2.5%); Custody officers 1, 2, 3 (5%); LPN 2 (5%); Psychologist 4 (5%)
- WSP: Classification counselors 1, 2, 3 (2.5%); Custody officers 1, 2, 3 (5%)

### Has the employer made a decision about whether to retain location pay?

A: The employer has not yet made that decision and is evaluating the question now. The employer did not propose to eliminate location pay in bargaining or at the interest arbitration hearing and the Union can challenge any decision regarding location pay that is arbitrary through the grievance and arbitration process.

### What was your Union's position regarding location pay in interest arbitration?

A: As a part of the proposal to increase your pay by 17%, the Union sought to equalize the pay across the entire bargaining unit with the intent of healing the divide statewide as a result of people being on different pay scales.



**TELL THE GOV.:**  
*Fund our contract!*

### TAKE ACTION NOW!

The arbitrator's award provides DOC employees the largest general wage increases of any State employee bargaining unit, but our increases are not guaranteed!

Send an email to the Governor urging him to include the arbitrator's interest arbitration award in his budget (you can use the message below).

Call the Governor's office at 360-902-4111 between 9 A.M. and 5 P.M. Monday through Friday.

*Dear Governor Inslee:*

*Washington State correctional employees perform some of the most difficult, dangerous work imaginable. Every day we put our lives on the line to protect the public from society's most dangerous criminals.*

*Despite the important role we play in keeping our communities safe, we are severely undervalued for the critical public safety work we perform. According to the State's 2010 and 2014 salary surveys, Washington State DOC employees in nearly all job classifications are compensated at a rate of between 10-40% less than employees in other jurisdictions who perform similar work.*

*A neutral arbitrator has recently issued a compensation award for our State's correctional employees. While not perfect, the award does take a small step toward rectifying this gross injustice. I urge you to include the arbitrator's award in the budget that you submit to the State legislature. The brave men and women who staff our State's prisons deserve better.*

*We are counting on you for your support.*

*Respectfully,*

# GOOD NEWS ON HEALTH CARE!

*Coalition reaches agreement that protects your benefits for the next two years*



The coalition of unions has reached an agreement over healthcare for state employees including Teamsters at the Department of Corrections.

The agreement preserves the existing premium share (85/15) and protects workers against the erosion of benefits. **This is**

**great news for DOC employees.**

Early on in negotiations, the State indicated that it wanted workers to shoulder a greater share of the premium costs as well as higher point-of-service costs. Your phone calls to the Governor's office helped preserving your benefits. Thank you for speaking out on this important issue!



## Holiday Membership Meetings

**S**tarting on November 18, we will be holding our holiday membership meetings at all DOC facilities across the State.

Topics for discussion include:

- ✓ **Interest arbitration - getting the award funded**
- ✓ **Lobbying strategy during legislative session**
- ✓ **Screening of interest arbitration video**
- ✓ **Statewide performance audit at DOC**
- ✓ **Issues at your facility**

Attend the meetings and make your voice heard!

For meeting times and locations, visit your Union's website at [www.teamsters117.org](http://www.teamsters117.org) or talk to your Business Representative.

FACILITY	MEETING DATE
AHCC	Dec. 5
CBCC	Nov. 19
CCCC	Dec. 11
CI-HQ	Dec. 9
CI - McNEIL ISLAND	Dec. 9
CRCC	Dec. 1
DOC HQ	Dec. 8
LCC	Nov. 19
MCC	Dec. 2
MCCCW	Dec. 11
OCC	Nov. 18
SCCC	Dec. 15
SWRBO	Dec. 10
WCC	Dec. 10
WCCW	Dec. 11
WSP	Dec. 3
Centralized Pharmacy	Dec. 11

## Q & A

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**How does the arbitrator's award compare with raises for other state employees?**

A: The arbitrator's award grants 9.8% over two years. The negotiated wage increase for general government employees is 4.8% over two years. The award increases the spread between DOC and all other general government state employees from the current 1.3% to 6.3%. We know of only one other interest arbitration award (ferry system) that awarded 4% in year one and 3% in year two. It is clear that interest arbitration yields higher results.

**Are your wage increases guaranteed?**

A: No. In order for your raises to be implemented, the Office of Financial Management (OFM) must certify to the Governor that the award is financially feasible. We expect to have an answer to that question within the next month. The Governor must include it in the budget and the legislature must fund the award. We have always anticipated that this will be the most challenging part of the process.

**What happens if the legislature does not fund your contract?**

A: The law provides that the State and the Union must return to the bargaining table with the help of a mediator. We anticipate that this will not occur until late spring or early summer of next year. The results of that process are entirely unpredictable, but it is highly unlikely that the outcome would be more favorable than this interest arbitration award.

**What happens next?**

A: Through the interest arbitration process, you will receive the largest general wage increases in years, but only if the Governor puts the award in his budget and the legislature funds the DOC contract. Over the next few months, we will need to engage in intense political action to pressure the governor and the legislature to fund the DOC contract. When it is time to take action, we will let you know.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Nov. 4, 2014 - Election deadline - Get your ballot in!

Nov. 15, 2014 - Local 117 Blood Drive

Dec. 18, 2014 - Holiday Membership Meeting in Tukwila

FOLLOW US ON THE WEB!



For more Teamsters news, visit the Local 117 website at [www.teamsters117.org](http://www.teamsters117.org).