



TEAMSTERS LOCAL 117

# The Guardian

News from the hardworking men and women of DOC

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

## CORRECTIONAL EMPLOYEES DEMAND FAIR WAGES

### State presents its initial economic proposal in bargaining

Over the last six years, Washington State correctional employees have made tremendous sacrifices to help the State climb out of the Great Recession.

They have seen three prisons close and massive cuts to the corrections budget to the tune of \$220 million. They have seen their health care costs rise while the cost of living has continued to increase.

For six years, correctional employees have forgone wage increases, even after the economy rebounded and the State's coffers began to refill. These sacrifices have put a strain on Teamster families and have impacted their well-being and their way of life.

The time for sacrifices is over.

The State needs to recognize the uniquely dangerous and challenging work that correctional employees perform and pay them accordingly. The State's own salary survey suggests that most correctional employees are compensated at rates of more than 20% less as compared with their counterparts who work outside of the prisons.

The State can't continue to make empty excuses and hide from its own hypocrisy.

In contract negotiations, your Union's bargaining committee is demanding fair wages and respect. But the State does not seem to be getting it.

The Department's initial economic proposal, presented on June 25, does not begin to recognize the sacrifices correctional employees have endured,

the stress and inherent dangers of the job, and the huge wage disparity that exists as compared with those who perform similar work outside of the State prison system.

The bargaining process is not exhausted, so there is still a chance that the State could revise its economic proposal. But if they don't, all Teamsters at the DOC need to be prepared for a fight.

Moving forward, we anticipate the following schedule:

#### July 8 and 9 – Contract Negotiations:

The focus of these bargaining sessions will continue to be on economics.

#### Late July/Early August - Contract Update Meetings:

We will be holding contract update meetings at all facilities to discuss the State's final proposal.

**Early Aug. – Contract Vote:** You will have the opportunity to vote on a contract proposal at the beginning of August. As we get closer to the contract vote, we will send out a mailing with detailed voting instructions.

**Late Aug. – Interest Arbitration Hearing (if necessary):** If the State's final proposal is unacceptable to the membership, there will be an interest arbitration hearing in the last two weeks of August. Whatever award the arbitrator issues will need to be funded by the State Legislature.

Your Union bargaining team is led by Secretary-Treasurer Tracey Thompson,



Sergeant Eric Smith, WCC

### Contract Calendar

**JULY 8 AND 9** – Contract negotiations in Tukwila.

**LATE JULY/EARLY AUGUST** - Contract update meetings statewide.

**EARLY AUGUST** – Members vote on the State's final contract proposal.

**LATE AUGUST** – There will be an interest arbitration hearing if members reject the State's final proposal.

**SEPTEMBER** - The Arbitrator will issue an interest arbitration award.

**OCTOBER 1** - Deadline to finalize the contract so that it can be included in the Governor's budget.

**OCT. 2014 THROUGH FEB. 2015** - We will need to work to make sure the Legislature funds our contract.

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## A message from your Director of Corrections



Michelle Woodrow

### FIGHTING STATE BUDGET CUTS

Brothers and Sisters:

In June, the Governor's budget office directed all state agencies, including the Department of Corrections, to create a contingency plan to prepare for up to 15% across-the-board budget cuts for the 2015-2017 biennium.

The Governor's office indicated that the cuts may be necessary to offset the projected budget shortfall and to comply with the Supreme Court's McCleary decision to fully fund K-12 education.

The State's budget crisis is very real, but the answer to the crisis is not further cuts at the Department of Corrections.

Since 2010, the State has cut \$220 million from the DOC and closed three prisons. Meanwhile the prison offender population has tripled in the past two decades. Now the DOC is preparing for additional cuts of up to \$200 million – a staggering amount that represents significantly more than the total operating budget of the entire Monroe Correctional Complex.

Whatever plan the Department develops, it is hard to imagine how any additional cuts can be made to the DOC without seriously jeopardizing staff safety and public safety.

This is a monumental challenge for Teamsters at DOC. It will require every member to get involved in the fight to preserve jobs and protect staff and the safety of our communities.

The State's revenue forecast will be formally released again in mid-September. Your Union's financial experts will be carefully analyzing the forecasts as they relate to the budget, and we are considering all possible legal action including filing a lawsuit and unfair labor practice charges.

Please monitor your Local Union's website at [www.teamsters117.org](http://www.teamsters117.org) for updates. When the time comes to take action, we will let you know.

Thank you for your service and stay safe.

Respectfully,

Michelle Woodrow  
Director of Corrections & Law Enforcement

## BARGAINING

Cont. from page 1

General Counsel Spencer Thal, Associate General Counsel Daniel Swedlow, and Director of Corrections & Law Enforcement Michelle Woodrow, all DOC Business Representatives and the following rank-and-file members:

- 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)
- TalisaBoad (WCCW, CO2)
- Paul Moore (WSP, RN2)
- Eric Burt (WSP, CC2)
- Justin Riley (WSP, CO2)

### Contract Update Meetings

*In late July and early August, we will be holding contract update meetings at facilities across the State. Attend the meetings and make your voice heard!*

FACILITY	DATE	LOCATION
AHCC	July 31	MSU Visiting Room
CBCC	July 30	Visit room
CCCC	July 29	Timberline BLDG
CI - McNEIL ISLAND	July 30	McNeil Island
CRCC	July 29	MSC in the ICP room
DOC HQ, SWRBO, CI-HQ	July 28	On Site
LCC	July 28	LCC Training Room
MCC		
MCCCW	August 1	Ramirez Room
OCC	July 31	Training Room
SCCC	July 28	Training Room C
WCC	July 29	Assembly Room
WCCW	August 1	R Building Fitness Room
WSP	July 28	MSC in the ICP room

# GETTING LEGISLATORS INTO THE PRISONS

Local 117's Political Department is Setting up Prison Tours for Legislators this Fall



The Walk of Remembrance at MCC-WSR in Monroe.

The general public has little to no idea what goes on behind prison walls and the critical role correctional employees play in keeping our communities safe. People pay attention when the bad guys are prosecuted, tried, sentenced, and locked up. And then they forget.

That holds true for legislators as well.

Our representatives down in Olympia typically don't have a clue what it means to get "thrown on" nor can they relate to

the constant threat of assault.

Because legislators hold the keys to the state coffers and will ultimately decide whether to fund our contract, we need to educate them about the uniquely dangerous and important work that correctional employees perform.

The best way to educate legislators is to talk with them, one-on-one. This can happen during lobby visits, at town hall meetings, or even over the phone.

**Remember that, as public servants, our State legislators work for us and are obligated to listen to our concerns.**

Perhaps the best way to educate legislators about the work we do is through a prison tour - not the kind of sanitized tour, orchestrated by management - but a hard-nosed trip through the prison led by Teamster line staff. This allows lawmakers to have candid conversations with Union

members.

Prison tours for legislators will be especially important this year because we will likely be in a tough fight to get our contract funded by the State.

Teamsters 117's political action team will be setting up prison tours for legislators this fall. For more information, contact Political Coordinator Dustin Lambro at 1-888-872-3489. ●

*"The more we call and visit our legislators, the more minds we can change. The people in Olympia don't work in this environment. They need to hear about it."*

- Steven Worden, WSP CO

## DEMANDS TO BARGAIN: Hashing it out with the State

It's been a busy year of bargaining with the Department. In addition to ongoing negotiations over your 2015-2017 collective bargaining agreement, your Union has filed demands to bargain over a number of important issues that impact Teamsters at the DOC.

### FILING A DEMAND TO BARGAIN

Your Union can issue a demand to bargain whenever the Department unilaterally implements or even contemplates making changes to your wages, hours, or working conditions. So if you suspect changes are being made without the Union's knowledge, be sure to inform your Business Representative immediately.

To initiate bargaining, we follow a standard procedure as outlined in the contract. Once we learn of a unilateral

change or of the Department's intent to make changes, your Union has 21 days to file a demand to bargain. The Department must respond to our request by scheduling a time to meet, also within 21 days.

The following represents a partial list of demands to bargain filed by your Union this year. All issues below have led to extensive bargaining with the Department:

- **Classification Counselors working out of class - statewide**
- **Roster management policy - statewide**
- **Specialized units staffing policy - statewide**
- **Regionalized pharmacy proposal - statewide**
- **Closed loop food service and food**

### factory - CRCC

- **Custody staff working as paint supervisors - CBCC**
- **The reallocation of Psychologist positions - MCC**
- **Issues related to e-cigarettes - WSP**
- **The opening of the 256-bed Williams Unit - WSP**
- **IMU polo shirts - AHCC, CBCC, MCC, SCCC, WCC, WSP**

Again, if you are uncertain if an issue at your facility warrants a demand to bargain, contact your Business Representative. It's likely that if it is an issue for you, members elsewhere in the State may be affected as well.

For updates on many of the issues listed in this article, check your Union's website at [www.teamsters117.org](http://www.teamsters117.org). ●

# LEARN HOW TO BEAT THE ODDS

The numbers facing the men and women who make a career in corrections are troubling to say the least:

- *Of all U.S. workers, correctional officers have one of the highest rates of nonfatal, work-related injuries.*
- *Both custody and non-custody correctional staff have PTSD rates that are higher than war veterans.*
- *One third of corrections personnel were found to be clinically depressed.*
- *Correctional staff job stress has been linked to premature death, physical and mental health problems, illness, social problems, and decreased job performance.*

Despite these alarming facts, there are plenty of correctional employees who manage not to become a statistic.

Finding mechanisms to cope with the extreme stress and dangers of the job is important, not only for your own health, but for the health of your family as well; indeed the entire community you serve and protect relies on your physical and psychological well-being.

## COPING WITH STRESS

A National Institute of Corrections training manual outlines the key strategies for alleviating stress.

Studies show that effective stress managers:

- *Know how to relax.*
- *Eat right and exercise.*
- *Get 6.5-7.5 hours of sleep a night.*
- *Don't worry about the unimportant stuff.*
- *Don't get angry often.*
- *Are organized.*
- *Manage their time effectively.*
- *Have and make use of a strong social support system.*
- *Live according to their values.*
- *Have a good sense of humor.*

Recognizing the symptoms of stress and burnout is also a key component to knowing when it's time to seek help.

## MAKE A SAFE CALL NOW!

If you are depressed, suffering from dependency or substance abuse, having suicidal thoughts, or just need someone to talk to, you can consult with a fellow public safety professional by calling Safe Call now at 206-459-3020.

**Your call is confidential - the Department will not know you are reaching out for help. Take a self-assessment online at [www.safecallnow](http://www.safecallnow).** ●

## CONVENTION RESOLUTION SUPPORTS CORRECTIONS

At this month's **Washington State Labor Convention** in Wenatchee, Teamster 117 delegates, including Sgt Michael Boe of MCC, will be introducing a resolution in support of State correctional employees. You can view the resolution in its entirety below:

### RESOLUTION OPPOSING CUTS TO STATE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS BUDGET AND SUPPORTING COMMENSURATE RAISES FOR DOC EMPLOYEES

WHEREAS, approximately 6,000 corrections staff who work in the Washington state prison system are members of Teamsters Local 117; and

WHEREAS, these workers go to work every day with offenders who pose a significant staff safety risk; and

WHEREAS, no worker should have to go to work every day in fear for their safety or their lives; and

WHEREAS, the average offender in prisons is increasingly more likely to be high violent and more prone to assaulting correctional staff; and

WHEREAS, the state has closed three institutions since 2010 and eliminated some \$240 million from the state corrections budget; and

WHEREAS, the Washington Management Service recently rebanded and gave all management raises while no correctional staff have received raises since 2008, and the State's own salary survey suggests that most correctional employees are compensated at rates of more than 20% less as compared with their counterparts who work outside of the prisons; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO, and their affiliates oppose any cuts to funding for the Department of Corrections and support wage increases for DOC employees commensurate with the danger of their jobs.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July 22-24 - WA State Labor Convention

July/August - Paint Tacoma Beautiful

Late August 2014 - Interest arbitration hearing (if necessary)

September 13 - Local 117 Soccer Tournament

September 18 - General Membership Meeting

## TEAMSTERS 117 ON THE WEB!



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