



SPRING 2017

THE GUARDIAN

NEWS FROM THE HARDWORKING TEAMSTERS OF DOC



**LOBBY DAY PHOTOS:
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TEAMSTER POWER

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TEAMSTER CORRECTIONS EMPLOYEES BRING
THEIR DEMANDS TO THE STATE CAPITOL



A MESSAGE FROM

MICHELLE WOODROW

PRESIDENT & DIRECTOR OF CORRECTIONS & LAW ENFORCEMENT



Our Voice In Olympia

OUR DOC LOBBY DAY WAS AMAZING.

More than 230 of you and your co-workers, family, and supporters attended the event.

It was our biggest, most successful Lobby Day ever. We doubled our attendance from last year.

Our group brought the demands of 5,600 corrections employees across the state directly to legislators in Olympia.

Our message to lawmakers was clear. The state legislature needs to

invest in the corrections employees who put their lives on the line to serve and protect our communities.

We met with dozens of lawmakers to deliver that message.

The night before our lobby visits, we held a legislative reception with lawmakers at the Red Lion hotel in Olympia. Cyrus Habib, our state's Lieutenant Governor, spoke at the event. We were able to visit with legislators to make sure they understand our priorities.

If you were not able to attend this year's Lobby Day, you still have plenty

of opportunity to make your voice heard. Once budget negotiations start, we will be calling on you to contact your legislators to ensure that our corrections contract gets funded.

Remember that all DOC corrections employees covered by our Teamsters contract are slated to receive at least a 10.5% general wage increase over the next two years. But you will not receive your raise unless the legislature funds your contract.

So be ready to take action!

You can view photos and KOMO 4 television

coverage from our Lobby Day event at our Teamsters Local 117 website at Teamsters117.org.

Thank you for everything you do. Please stay safe.

Respectfully,

Michelle Woodrow
President and Director of Corrections & Law Enforcement



Traci Eshun (l) and Tyrrell Baker of WCCW with Michelle Woodrow (r).

"THE STATE NEEDS TO INVEST IN OUR CORRECTIONS EMPLOYEES."

- Michelle Woodrow
President and Director of Corrections & Law Enforcement



Tyrrell Baker of WCCW speaks to hundreds of Local 117 members gathered on the Capitol steps.

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

Hundreds of Teamster Corrections Employees bring their message to Olympia

It was an impressive sight.

More than two hundred and thirty Teamsters working for the Department of Corrections, along with their families and supporters, congregated at the State Capitol for our DOC Lobby Day event.

Local 117 members met with dozens of lawmakers, urging them to invest in corrections employees who put their lives on the line to protect the public.

"We're here to educate legislators about what we do to keep the public safe," said Sergeant Thomas Orth, who traveled with his wife,

Kim, from Spokane to speak with legislators. "They need to be in our boots and see what we do every day because we're not only protecting ourselves, we're protecting them and their families."

Members talked with legislators about the dangers of prison work while focusing on a few key policy issues.

"Our top priority is to ensure that the state legislature invests in corrections employees by funding their contract," said John Scearcy, Secretary-Treasurer of Teamsters Local 117. "Corrections

employees put their lives on the line to protect the public, yet they are significantly underpaid for the important public safety work they perform."

In their visits with lawmakers, DOC staff also emphasized the need for the legislature to fund an external audit of staffing levels in all Washington State prisons. The DOC operates under a staffing model established in 1988. An external audit would identify parts of the system that are understaffed and make recommendations for improvements.

"Officers are working at

a 1-135 ratio to the inmates in the living units. We don't have extra officers helping with tier checks. We're not able to get done what we need to get done security-wise. That puts us at risk," said Ronny Matsen, a correctional sergeant at the Stafford Creek Corrections Center in Aberdeen.

Our legislators need to hear from us on this issue.

And don't forget to call the Legislative Hotline at 1-800-562-6000 and tell your legislators to invest in corrections employees by funding the DOC contract.



“THEY NEED TO BE IN OUR BOOTS AND SEE WHAT WE DO EVERY DAY BECAUSE WE’RE NOT ONLY PROTECTING OURSELVES, WE’RE PROTECTING THEM AND THEIR FAMILIES.”

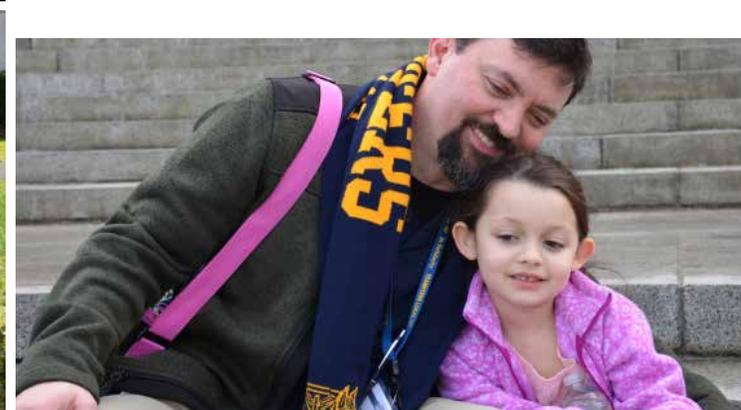
- Sergeant Thomas Orth, AHCC





“WE’RE WORKING AT A 1-135 RATIO TO THE INMATES IN THE LIVING UNITS. THAT PUTS US AT RISK.”

- Sergeant Ronny Matsen, SCCC





Eighteen DOC employees who maintain and operate the McNeil Island ferries joined our Union on Dec. 10.

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

New DOC members regain hope after uncertain period without representation.

More groups of unrepresented staff at the Department of Corrections are building power and organizing to join Teamsters.

Eighteen ferry workers who operate and maintain the fleet of vessels that service McNeil Island joined our Union last December. Overwhelming majorities of four other groups – Correctional Specialists 2s, Occupational Nurse Consultants, Recreational Specialist 4s, and Fiscal Analysts – have recently filed petitions for certification with the Public Employees Relations Commission (PERC) and are awaiting a ruling from the agency.

The ferry workers are unique in that they were previously represented by another Union. After a turbulent decertification process in 2015, they endured a tough stretch

of nearly a year and a half without representation.

“There was a lot of uncertainty, and we lost a lot of benefits. We tried to encourage each other and keep a positive attitude, but it was pretty sketchy for a while,” said Brian Carrigan, a senior deck hand with nearly 10 years of state service.

Carrigan and co-worker, George Luttrell, explained the perils of losing their rights under their contract.

“We lost our clothing allowance and a personal leave day – the State took that away from us,” Luttrell said. The group also lost their right to overtime after eight hours and their right to have sick and annual leave count as compensable

hours when calculating overtime.

As much as the lost benefits, the group felt the daily insecurity of not having a voice at work. “It was hard for a while. I feel like a weight has been lifted off of my shoulders,” said shipwright supervisor, Gary Taimanglo.

The group reached out to a few Unions and talked to individuals who could speak to the nature and quality of representation.

“We knew Teamsters are one of the biggest unions. They’re strong. We

added John Johnson.

The group’s Union Rep, Sarena Davis, has filed a demand to bargain over their contract. Bargaining dates should be secured in the coming weeks.

“It will be nice to have someone that actually represents us,” Schoettle said. “It will be nice to negotiate over our clothing allowance and the other benefits we lost.”

For a group that works in the elements and is regularly exposed to chemicals and other hazards, the clothing

“WE KNEW TEAMSTERS ARE ONE OF THE BIGGEST UNIONS. THEY’RE STRONG. WE KNEW IT WOULD BE A GOOD FIT.”

- George Schoettle

knew it would be a good fit,” said George Schoettle, one of the marine mechanics.

“We wanted to go to Teamsters because we knew it was a better Union,”

allowance and other protections come in handy. Those are some of the issues we will be taking with us as we head into bargaining with the State.



Brian Carrigan (l) & George Luttrell (r), two senior deckhands in the new unit.



From l to r: Gary Taimanglo, Anthony Camacho, George Schoettle & John Johnson

INVEST IN CORRECTIONS EMPLOYEES

BY JOHN SCEARCY, TEAMSTERS LOCAL 117 SECRETARY-TREASURER



The state legislature is right to focus on fully-funding our public education system as required under the McCleary decision. We need to invest in our children.

But legislators in Olympia must also invest in the public servants who provide essential services to the residents of our state.

These include the corrections employees who staff our state's prison system. Corrections employees put their lives on the line to serve and protect our communities. They perform uniquely stressful and challenging work in a dangerous environment.

Unfortunately, we often ignore the dangers of corrections work until disaster strikes. This was the case earlier this year when inmates at a Delaware prison held four staff members hostage for two days. The crisis ended in tragedy, with one officer injured and

another found dead.

The timing of this incident is especially troubling given its proximity to the anniversary of the death of Officer Jayme Biendl, who was murdered in 2011 at the Monroe Correctional Complex.

Officer Biendl and the corrections officer in Delaware made the ultimate sacrifice to keep us safe. We can never completely prevent these tragedies, but we can take immediate steps to protect the men and women who risk their lives to protect our communities.

The legislature can start by approving an external audit of staffing levels in all Washington prisons. The Department of Corrections operates under a staffing model that is dangerously outdated. An external audit would identify parts of the system that are understaffed and make recommendations for improvements.

We can modify the Public Records Act to protect the personal information of DOC employees. Many correctional employees are harassed by felons who obtain their information through public disclosure. A bill (SB 5326) before the state senate would allow prison staff to seek legal damages if their information is used for nefarious purposes.

Finally, we can fund the corrections contract. Washington's corrections employees are significantly underpaid for the dangerous work they perform.

Experienced officers, who represent the largest job classification at the state's Department of Corrections, earn 37 percent less than officers who work at the county level. Other DOC job classifications are similarly underpaid.

The corrections contract contains wage increases for corrections staff that were awarded by an independent arbitrator and deemed financially feasible by the

state's Office of Financial Management.

The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis' impact model indicates that a fully-funded DOC contract would generate \$567 million of economic activity statewide. Local small businesses benefit when community members have more money in their pockets.

Investing in corrections employees and other public servants will make our communities stronger and our state's prisons safer. It will help retain experienced staff who are best suited to prepare offenders for life after prison.

Many of our corrections employees are military veterans who served our country and are now continuing that service back home. Our support will help protect these men and women who have devoted their lives to public safety. It will also improve the economic stability of our communities.

UPCOMING TEAMSTER EVENTS

MARCH 10 - DOC Shop Steward meeting in Tukwila

MARCH 11 - Shop Steward Seminar and Appreciation Day

MARCH 16 - General Membership Meeting in Tukwila



TEAMSTERS LOCAL 117
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