Thank you for your sacrifice & service

On behalf of Secretary-Treasurer, John Scearcy, and the rest of our union’s executive board, I want to wish you and your family a blessed holiday season. This is a time of year to express togetherness and gratitude. As Teamsters, we have a lot to be thankful for. By standing together with our co-workers, we have a level of protection and job security not available to our non-union counterparts. Last year, we achieved across-the-board wage increases of 10.5% for the 2017-2019 biennium and negotiated interest arbitration rights into our contract.

But our ability to negotiate strong contracts at the DOC will be tested next year as we move into an open shop environment. The best way we can prepare for this change is to continue to have each other’s backs, commit to each other, and our union.

You can learn more about the risks of open shop by talking with your shop steward or other member leaders at the DOC or by visiting www.FamilyStrengthCommunity.org.

YOUR SERVICE, YOUR SACRIFICE

As the holidays approach, I am reminded again about the tremendous sacrifice you make to serve and protect our communities. While most families are celebrating together, many of you are on-duty, away from your loved ones, often in harm’s way, as you fulfill your obligation to keep the public safe.

Unlike our schools, libraries, courts, or offices of state or local government, the prisons never close. Too often that sacrifice goes unnoticed and is taken for granted.

At our prison facilities, the mood among staff is often one of frustration. The State has been known to appease offenders while the sacrifice of the men and women on duty is often ignored. That dynamic needs to change. We must continue to educate the public and our elected officials about the challenging reality of working inside a prison.

As members of Teamsters 117, we have a responsibility to speak out to ensure that our legislators understand our concerns. I encourage you to attend our upcoming Legislative Reception and Lobby Day on February 12-13 so that you can convey that message directly. To register for Lobby Day, please visit www.teamsters117.org/doclobby18.

Once again, thank you for your service and for your membership in Teamsters Local 117.

Happy holidays to you and your family.

Respectfully,

Michelle Woodrow
President and Director of Corrections & Law Enforcement
Last February, hundreds of Teamsters corrections members and their families converged on the State Capitol in Olympia to send a message to legislators: It’s time to value the dangerous, challenging work that DOC staff provide to keep our communities safe.

Our meetings with lawmakers resulted in a major success. The legislature voted to fund our DOC contract, which will increase wages for all Teamster-represented staff by a minimum of 10.5% over the 2017-2019 biennium. Funding our contract also means that we now have access to interest arbitration rights, which we negotiated as a part of the agreement.

We were able to accomplish these goals because we showed up in force and took our demands directly to legislators.

Nearly a year has passed since our 2017 DOC Lobby Day, and now we’re gearing up to go to Olympia again. With a short, 60-day legislative session in 2018, circumstances will be different next year, but the need for a massive turnout is no less important.

Our 2018 DOC Legislative Reception and Lobby Day will be held on February 12-13. All DOC Teamsters are invited to attend.

We will be holding a dinner and reception with legislators starting at 7:30pm at the RL Hotel in Olympia on February 12. The reception is a great opportunity to network with other Teamsters from across the state, share experiences, and talk with the attending legislators in an informal setting.

On the morning of February 13, we will hold a lobby training and have breakfast before heading over to the Capitol for our appointments with legislators.

Accommodations will be provided for members on the night of February 12, 2018. You can register for Lobby Day on our union’s website at www.teamsters117.org/doclobby18. To reserve a room, you must register by Friday, January 12, 2018.

It’s important that we have an excellent showing at this event so we can get our message across to legislators about the critical public safety service we provide.

If you have questions about Lobby Day, please contact Political Coordinator Dustin Lambro at 206-794-2606.

OUR VOICE IN OLYMPIA


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Corey Schmidt, an officer at WSP, has over 20 years of state service.
They call themselves the “Freedom Foundation”, but they’re nothing about freedom.

“They hide who they are,” said Corey Schmidt, a 20-year officer at the Washington State Penitentiary.

Amy Adams, a senior secretary at WSP, agrees.

“They get millions of dollars from wealthy investors who are pushing to get our personal information.” Adams is referring to recent public disclosure requests by the Freedom Foundation targeting DOC staff.

In the 2017 legislative session, the Freedom Foundation lobbied against funding our DOC contract. Now they’re knocking on the doors of state employees and sending out mailers telling you to “opt-out” or abandon your union membership.

“I got something in the mail from them last Friday,” said Michelle Alejo, an LPN3 at WCC. “I don’t pay any attention to it because I know they’re for big corporations.”

The Freedom Foundation is funded by the same wealthy special interests that are trying to limit worker freedom through the courts.

With the Janus vs AFSCME case that is slated to be heard by the Supreme Court early next year, they want to eliminate your freedom to negotiate union security clauses that create a union shop.

“If they are able to lower our wages, if they are able to cut our time out, if they’re able to weaken our CBA and the verbiage that protects us, it benefits them, it doesn’t benefit us,” said Alfredo Cruz, an officer at CRCC.

While the outcome of the Janus case is pending, legal experts believe that an open shop environment will likely come to the public sector as early as March of next year. If this occurs, your DOC co-workers would be able to abandon their union membership, but continue to receive all of the benefits of representation without having to pay for it.

“I was there when it was open shop,” said Larry Reeves, a sergeant at WCC with over 23 years of state service. “Our union didn’t have any power then. Things began to turn around when we got a closed shop.”

The Janus case is the culmination of decades of attacks on working families by wealthy CEOs and the politicians who do their bidding to rig the economy in their favor. They want to weaken unions because unions have played a central role in defending the freedom we cherish – to stand together and negotiate a fair return on our work.

The best way for us as union members to prepare for open shop is to stand together with our co-workers and reaffirm our commitment to each other. “With open shop coming, we really need to stick together to make sure we have a strong voice with our union,” says Lynnise White, an officer at MCC with over 30 years in corrections.

Members are talking to members, signing commitment cards, and talking about the Freedom Foundation’s agenda and the importance of defending our union. By working together, we can build a stronger union with members leading the way.

For more information about the Freedom Foundation and to learn how we can prepare for open shop visit www.FamilyStrengthCommunity.org.
With open shop coming, we really need to stick together to make sure we have a strong voice with our union.

- LYNNISE WHITE - CO/MCC
31 years in corrections
Our ability to negotiate makes us STRONG.

When contract negotiations end, our demands to bargain do not cease.

Our union’s bargaining with the DOC does not stop after the completion of contract negotiations. Throughout the year, we bargain with the State over a number of issues impacting your work.

In 2017, we have filed demands to bargain over newly-organized units, newly-created positions, the elimination of certain positions, and many other issues.

Most recently, a group of member leaders (LouAnn Anderson, Phillip Cook, John Dunn, Becky Haney-Nixon, Venus Ortiz, Jessica Poston, and Shawn Piliponis), along with union representatives Tawny Humbert and Sarena Davis, met with the State to bargain over the Advanced Corrections Case Management program impacting classification counselors.

Bargaining took place at our Teamsters Union Hall in Tukwila on Wednesday, October 24.

At the bargaining table, our member team and union representatives discussed the excessive workload demanded by the program and the emotional impact of the work. We passed our complete initial proposal and the State asked clarifying questions. We are in the process of scheduling further dates to continue discussions over the program.

It’s important to remember that any time the DOC implements changes that may impact your wages, hours, or working conditions, they are required to enter into negotiations with the union. Failure to do so constitutes an Unfair Labor Practice.

Stay vigilant and report any such changes to your shop steward or union representative so that we can file a demand to bargain. This is your right as a Teamsters 117 member under your contract and under the law.

If you have questions about the recent bargaining over the Advanced Corrections program, please contact lead negotiators Tawny Humbert at tawny.humbert@teamsters117.org or Sarena Davis at sarena.davis@teamsters117.org.

TEAMSTERS LOCAL 117 BARGAINING - 2017

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Thank you to our Shop Stewards for their service. Their work in enforcing our DOC contract is vital to having a strong union in the workplace.