

– Testimony –
Judiciary Committee – 13 MAR 2006

Good afternoon Senator McDonald & Representative Lawlor and all distinguished committee members.

My name is Gene Tewksbury I'm VP of Connecticut Correction Employees, Local 1565 and I have 20 years of state service as a Correction Officer.

I am here today to speak in favor of Bill 5540 – An Act Concerning Staffing of the Department of Correction.

The Department of Correction is playing a “shell game” with numbers when it comes to the staffing issue of Correction Officers.

When Commissioner Lantz changed the Shift Relief Factor from 2.24 to 1.6 it instantly wiped out staffing shortage of 700 Correction Officer Positions and left unjustifiable the Overtime needed to fill the real time shortages in the Correctional Facilities.

This budget trick has a huge impact on staff through Mandatory Overtime and increase usage of Sick Time due to illness and injury caused by increases in overtime.

But it does allow the Commissioner to report, as she did to the Appropriations Committee on 16 FEB 2006, that she is “...maintaining a staff vacancy level of just 3.5%.”

If you were to look at the Department of Correction as if it were a “tree” and you are cutting around the base how long will it take before it all comes down – it doesn't matter because if you cut the base it will come down.

Thank you & are there any questions

Gene Tewksbury