

– Testimony –
Labor & Public Employees Committee – 7 MAR 2006

Good afternoon Senator Prague & Representative Ryan and all other 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 support of Bill 5649 – An Act Concerning State Employee Donation of Vacation or Personal Leave.

I would like to highlight an example that will exemplify why this Bill does not go far enough.

Long term illness!

Several of our members have been stricken with long term illness. Two officers were both attacked by cancer. Both of these officers had accrued leave but no where enough. Both succumbed to their cancers, but before they were taken, their fellow bargaining unit members knew the only way they could help them was through the donation of time. They donated as much time as they possibly could so these people would have one less worry while trying to fight this deadly disease.

Also, just recently a correction officer suffered multiple strokes. He will not be able to return to work. But his fellow brothers and sisters are donating time to him so that he will not have financial hardship or lose benefits until he is able to be medically retired.

How do you fight cancer and worry about losing your insurance.

Accidental off duty injury!

A case in point, about a year and half ago a correction officer was shot in a hunting accident by his friend, a state police officer, and yes they are still friends. Even though he had over 150 days of accrued leave we have donated over a year of time to our fellow officer, and it could be another year before he returns to work. The irony here is that if the situations were reversed there would be no problem with the donation of vacation leave, the state police donate sick leave to their members.

I request that you amend the language and add Sick Leave to the Act.

Thank you for your time & are there any questions.

Gene Tewksbury