

**Amendment to Legislative Bill #5650 Extending Hazardous Duty Retirement Benefits to Clericals Working in Correctional Facilities.**

Good Afternoon Senator Prague and honorable members of this Committee. My name is Aleshia Hall. I am an Administrative Assistant who has worked at a maximum-security institution for over 13 years.

I am here today with the hope that by providing you with insight into the hazards inherent in the daily routines of correctional clerical employees, you will agree that it is not only appropriate, but that it is way over due, for fair and equal retirement benefits to be afforded to correctional clericals.

Correctional Clericals must conduct themselves in the same security-conscious fashion as the Hazardous Duty employees. We sign for and abide by the same Unit Directives and General Post Orders. We receive the same training in how to handle:

- Blood Bourne Pathogens, HIV/AIDS
- Fire Safety
- Stress Management
- CPR
- Suicide Prevention
- Management of Aggressive Behavior

As individuals in a high-risk environment, we are offered annual flu shots and mandated to protect our health from the hazards of our daily exposures through Annual TB testing, and receiving the Hepatitis B Vaccine series.

I have realized these dangers first hand many times throughout the years, most significantly in April, 2000. After collecting inmate privileged correspondence from the housing units, I was exposed to an inmate's bodily fluids. It seems one of our inmate felt that if he was going to die in prison from the complications of HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, and syphilis, he wanted the Warden to die too. However, the Warden is not the person who handles the correspondence, the clericals are. As a result of this exposure, I was immediately sent for medical baseline testing which revealed that despite my participation in the Hepatitis B Vaccine series, my immunity levels were not significant enough to prevent me from contracting and communicating these diseases. To protect the health of myself and my family, I underwent a series of Immune Globulin injections and repeated the Hepatitis B Vaccine series. The side effects of aching, dizziness, and vomiting that followed these injections was a necessary consequence that prevented me from both contracting these diseases and from communicating them to my husband and young children. The inmate who instigated this assault was prosecuted by the Connecticut State Police and subsequently sentenced to additional prison time.

This is just an example of the inherent hazardous conditions correctional clericals are exposed to daily. We are not asking for preferential treatment, we are just asking for equal treatment.

Thank you for your consideration.

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