

Bill #675 and Bill #5650
Extending Hazardous Duty Retirement Benefits to
Correctional Clericals Receiving Unpleasant Duty Pay Stipend
Public Hearing: March 24, 2006

Good afternoon Chairman McDonald, Chairman Lawlor, and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is **Aleshia Hall**. I am an Administrative Assistant who has worked at a maximum-security prison 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 Department of Correction's employees receiving Hazardous Duty Retirement Benefits. We sign for and abide by the same Unit Directives and General Post Orders. We receive the same training on handling:

- Blood Bourne Pathogen, HIV and AIDS exposures
- Fire Safety
- Stress Management
- Suicide Prevention
- Management of Aggressive Behavior

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

I have realized these dangers first hand many times throughout the years, most significantly in April 2000. After collecting privileged correspondence from the inmate housing units, I was exposed to an inmate's bodily fluids. It seems one of our inmates felt that if he was going to die in prison from the complications of HIV/AIDS, Hepetitis, 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 Hepatitis-B vaccine series, my immunity levels were not significant enough to prevent me from contracting and communicating these diseases. To protect my health and that of 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 were a necessary consequence that prevented me from both contracting these diseases and 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 one example of the inherent hazardous conditions Correctional Clericals are exposed to daily.

Our request for Hazardous Duty Retirement Benefits is not a request for preferential treatment, just treatment equal to our peers. Thank you for your consideration in support of this legislation.

Respectfully submitted by:

Aleshia M. Hall
161 Woodville Road
Warren, Connecticut 06777
(860) 868-1204