

**Testimony of Gerald Nelson**

**New Haven District Vice-President**

**IBPO Local 731**

**Judiciary Committee**

**February 27<sup>th</sup> , 2007**

**House Bill 6674**

Greetings Ladies and Gentlemen of the Committee,

First let me thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak today.

I am Gerald Nelson, New Haven District Vice-President for IBPO Local 731. I would like to begin by telling you a little about myself. In 1981 I graduated from the University of Southern Mississippi with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Criminal Justice. I then went on active duty in the U.S. Army as a tank officer in Germany for three years. In 1984, upon my separation from service I became a certified Police Officer for a period of nearly ten years. I also served as an armed security guard for Litton Industries, a division of Northrup-Grummon at their shipbuilding facility in Pascagoula, Mississippi, where I became an assistant shift supervisor. This facility employed approximately 21,000 and is a major supplier of warships to the U.S. Navy and while there I was heavily involved in the restoration of the USS Cole and post 9-11 security concerns. I tell you this so that you understand that I have a strong background in law enforcement and security needs.

I have been asked to speak to you today over prisoner transportation concerns in support of House Bill 6674.

About 20 prisoner transportation vehicles operate out of New Haven transporting

prisoners to courthouses in New Haven, Meriden, Derby, Milford, Bridgeport, Norwalk, Stamford, Bantam, Litchfield, Danbury, and Waterbury daily. This activity, on average, results in the movement of over 600 prisoner each day.

Many of the vehicles used for this activity are designed to carry 18 or 22 prisoners and all of these have over 120,000 miles on them. Some of the mechanical failures that have occurred in the last year are, transmission failures, brake failure, no air conditioning in prisoner compartment during heat emergency days, inadequate or no heat, broken door locks, broken steps on rear bumper, broken door lock on crew compartment, and numerous other malfunctions.

The radio system installed in the vehicles is totally inadequate and in many locations cannot be used to contact the transportation supervisor. Transport personnel widely use their personal cell phones to maintain contact with their supervisor and coordinate their activities with other vehicles.

For over one year this local and myself have expressed concern over the condition of these vehicles to Judicial Branch. We are continuously told vehicles are on order but none arrive. On Feb 7, 2006 I was told by a Court Planner that vehicles had been ordered and would arrive in August. Of course he did not say August of what year.

Prisoners with special needs, such as wheelchair bound, were transported by use of a rental car at cost to the State. When Marshals expressed concern about this Judicial Branch supplied a station wagon for use, just because the doors do not secure, there is no prisoner screen and no two way radio does not seem to matter.

The mind set is get the prisoners to court and all other security and safety

concerns seem to be secondary. We ask for help from branch and all we get is blank stares.

I could expound on this and other issues but time constraints restrict my comments. I would like to thank you for this opportunity to speak to you today and wish you all well.

I would be happy to answer any questions as best I can.

Gerald Nelson  
District Vice-President  
New Haven  
IBPO Local 731