

RE: RAISED BILL NO. 6958

AN ACT EXTENDING HAZARDOUS DUTY RETIREMENT BENEFITS FOR
CLERICAL WORKERS AT CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

I began working for the State of Connecticut in 1988 and transferred to the Department of Correction's maximum security Manson Youth Institution in 1990 in the position of Secretary to the School Principal. I was sent to the DOC Training Academy, which was then in Mansfield, Ct., approximately a one-hour trip twice a day for six and one-half weeks. I was placed in a mixed class with the majority being correctional officers. I performed the same training alongside the officers, which included management of aggressive behavior, cell extraction and report writing. I was commended by the director for my high scores on daily tests and character and graduated from the DOC's Center for Training and Staff Development.

From the very beginning at Manson, one of my duties was to supervise one or more inmates at a time in the school department. Some of their supervised duties include janitorial work, assistance in receiving and distributing supplies, moving furniture and various chores. Many times I am left alone in a room with misbehaved inmates waiting to see the Principal or his assistants. I recently received a letter of commendation from a Captain for discovering and reporting a breach of security in the institution.

Clericals are not segregated from the inmates. All day long we work and move throughout the institution, including inmates' housing units, in the immediate presence of inmates incarcerated for such things as assault, rape and murder. We are called to perform duties alongside hazardous duty staff when our institutions are on lockdown. We are required to attend yearly training, together with correctional officers and other hazardous duty staff. Some of this training takes place in other correctional institutions where, again, inmates are working or moving in our vicinity. At times, I have been in areas in these places with no staff in the area.

In addition to correctional officers and teachers, maintenance workers, kitchen and laundry workers, librarians, religious service staff and others all receive hazardous duty retirement benefits. Some Central Office employees also receive these benefits. In my area, where durational

employees are replacing full-time clericals, their titles have recently been changed to include "correctional" in their title.

We, too, are the Department of Correction. Please honor this by granting the clerical staff hazardous duty retirement benefits. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judith W. West". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name.

Judith W. West
Secretary II