

## **Council 4 AFSCME Testimony - March 8, 2010 – GAE Committee**

### **HB 5404, An Act Concerning the Nondisclosure of Certain Information Regarding Department of Correction Employees to Inmates Under the Freedom of Information Act**

Good morning Chairman Slossberg, Chairman Spallone and members of the GAE Committee. My name is John T. Pepe. I am the President of AFSCME Local 391. Our union, along with AFSCME Locals 387 and 1565, represent nearly 5,000 front-line correctional employees in Connecticut. I am here to speak in favor of HB 5404, An Act Concerning the Nondisclosure of Certain Information Regarding Department of Correction Employees to Inmates Under the Freedom of Information Act.

This bill is vital to correction officers' and employees' safety. It will prohibit the disclosure of personnel, medical and similar information of current and former employees of the Department of Correction or Whiting Forensic Division.

Inmates do not have a good reason for asking for this information. Such inmate information requests about staff have been used to harass staff members. Information is traded in prison, almost as a commodity. Information on staff is sometimes highly sought after. A female correction officer recently testified before the legislature about an inmate who tattooed the first and last name of this officer on his arm and finger.

Inmates are aware that staff must follow a strict policy of no "undue familiarity" with inmates. There have been incidents where inmates have tried to get staff in trouble with superiors by pretending that a staff member gave their personal information to an inmate.

Correction staff jobs are stressful. Two different actuarial reports found that the average mortality age for a correction officer is 58. This high mortality rate is due to the affects of job stress. Inmates FOI'ing our personal information is one more stress factor that we don't need.

We know when we become correction officers that we will be at risk on the job. We accept that. But, our families should not have to be put at risk because an inmate can access information that can eventually lead to the discovery of our families' names and addresses. I have attached a Hartford Courant article about the murder of a federal judge's family that has all the earmarks of a retaliatory killing, because the judge handled the case of a leader of a criminal enterprise. Our staff deals with members of criminal enterprises all the time.

Please pass this bill. It will make the correction staff and the public safer. Thank you.

## **chicagotribune.com**

### **Federal judge's family killed**

#### **Husband, mother found slain in basement**

#### **Jurist had been a target of white supremacist**

By David Heinzmann and Jeff Coen

Tribune staff reporters

March 1, 2005

U.S. District Judge Joan H. Lefkow found her husband and mother shot dead in the basement of her home Monday night, less than a year after white supremacist Matthew Hale was convicted of trying to have her murdered for holding him in contempt of court.

Michael F. Lefkow, 64, an attorney, and Donna Grace Humphrey, 90, were lying in blood with gunshot wounds to the head when the judge arrived to a darkened house at 6 p.m., a source close to the investigation said.

Police said they were conducting "death investigations," and cautioned about drawing any connections to Hale, who is awaiting sentencing for trying to solicit the judge's murder. Sources said Michael Lefkow and Humphrey were found together, each was shot once in the head. No weapon was recovered, but police found two .22 caliber casings.

Security at the Lefkow home--including a camera mounted outside the home and guards posted on the block in unmarked cars--had been beefed up after the allegations against Hale emerged in January 2003. But neighbors said the extra measures tailed off about the time Hale was convicted in April 2004.

Investigators say there was a sign of forced entry, a broken window, at the family's three-story gray-sided home in the 5200 block of North Lakewood Avenue in the Edgewater neighborhood.

Neighbors on Monday night said the judge ran into the street screaming after discovering the bodies and was consoled by police officers who put a blanket over her. She was taken to the Belmont Area headquarters while detectives, evidence technicians and federal agents worked the scene in and around the home.