

Council 4 AFSCME Testimony – April 8, 2011 Committee

SB 1234, An Act Concerning the Nondisclosure of Residential Addresses of Certain Public Officials and Employees

Good morning Chairman Coleman, Chairman Fox and members of the Judiciary Committee. We are Jon T. Pepe, president of AFSCME Local 391, Luke Leone, president of Local 1565 and Lisa Marie Fontano, president of Local 387. Our locals, part of Council 4 AFSCME, represent nearly 5,000 front-line correctional employees in Connecticut. I am here to speak in favor of SB 1234, AAC Nondisclosure of Residential Addresses of Certain Public Officials and Employees.

This bill is vital to correction officers' and employees' safety. It will prohibit the disclosure of addresses of personnel of the Correction, Public Safety, Judicial or other sensitive departments. Unfortunately, there have been several incidents in which inmates have tried to get personal information such as employees' addresses in order 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, such as addresses, 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.