

Department of Correction

Testimony of Leo C. Arnone

Labor and Public Employees Committee

Committee No. 359 *An Act Imposing Employer Notice to Employees Regarding Mandatory Overtime*

February 15, 2011

Good afternoon, Senator Prague, Representative Zalaski and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. The Department of Correction opposes Committee Bill No. 359, *An Act Concerning Employer Notice to Employees Regarding Mandatory Overtime*.

The Department of Correction is a 24/7 operating system and employs close to 4,000 correction officers that have responsibility for maintaining the safety and security of the state's correctional facilities.

Each facility's minimum staffing coverage is determined by the agency's administration and is based on public safety, facility needs, inmate population and security. Mandatory overtime of time staff is done infrequently as staff routinely volunteers for unscheduled shifts. However, there are occasions on which the Department has no choice but to require staff to work an unscheduled shift with minimal notice. Mandatory overtime is a vital tool used by the Department to maintain safe and secure operations and continuity of care. Additionally, there is an agreement among the State of Connecticut, Council 4 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (NP4) and Connecticut State Employees Association SEIU Local 2001 (NP8) that addresses procedures to equalize overtime opportunities among employees.

Below are examples in which mandating staff is required and necessary:

- Sick Coverage
- Family Sick Coverage
- Vacation Coverage
- Work Training Coverage
- Administrative Leave Coverage
- Personal Leave Coverage
- Jury Duty
- Funeral Coverage
- Family Medical Leave Act
- Workman's Comp

- Natural disasters
- Emergencies, i.e. inmate hospital trips, late court cases, etc.
- Facility based transfers
- Funeral trips
- Facility emergencies i.e. Fights, security breaches, etc.
- Unauthorized leave (staff fail to show up for scheduled shift)
- Staff report late to work
- No voluntary staff coverage
- Suspensions
- Military Leave
- Union Business

In many cases the Department would not know 24 hours in advance if mandatory overtime is needed. If the Department blanketed a number of employees with notice as required in an attempt to ensure coverage, the result would be having excess overtime called. On the other hand, if the agency could not freeze employees, facilities would end up with uncovered areas or having to curtail inmate programming. For these reasons, the Department opposes Committee Bill No. 359.

Thank you for the opportunity to present the Department's views on this matter.