Department of Correction

Testimony of Leo C. Arnone

Public Safety and Security Committee

Raised Bill No. 5247, *An Act Concerning the Penalty for Assault of Public Safety, Emergency Medical, Public Transit or Health Care Personnel*

February 28, 2012

Good morning, Senator Hartley, Representative Dargan and members of the Public Safety and Security Committee. The Department of Correction supports Raised Bill No. 5247, *An Act Concerning the Penalty for Assault of Public Safety, Emergency Medical, Public Transit or Health Care Personnel.*

Fluid throws are of increasing concern for the Department of Correction. Not only is it one of the most degrading experiences to have bodily fluids hurled at a correctional employee while performing his or her professional duties, it is also potentially life threatening. The potential for the transmission of disease by the assault of bodily fluids is very high in the correctional system. The diseases that may result from a fluid throw include the HIV virus, hepatitis B and other blood borne pathogens.

If a correctional employee has a significant exposure, immediate action is taken and the post-exposure protocol that follows is extreme. The prophylactic treatment that follows a significant exposure has some serious side effects that can last for more than a month and include flu like symptoms such as nausea, diarrhea and headache. The employee also has the burden of having to be tested every six months and the very real concern of not knowing whether or not the disease has been transmitted. This affects not only the employee but the employee's family as well.

As a correctional professional, I can tell you that inmates understand the reality of getting additional time. Raised Bill No. 5247 would provide a disincentive for inmates to assault a correctional employee. It will be an additional tool that can provide a safer more secure environment for staff members.

Thank you for the opportunity to address this very important matter.