



3/22/13

Council 4 AFSCME Testimony – March 22, 2013 Judiciary Committee

Good morning Chairman Coleman, Chairman Fox and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Jon Pepe. I am the president of AFSCME Correction Employee Local 391 of Council 4 AFSCME. My testimony is endorsed by the other two correction local presidents, Luke Leone from 1565 and Moises Padilla from Local 387. Our union, along with Council 4 AFSCME and correction locals, represents nearly 5,000 front-line correctional employees in Connecticut.

Our union strongly opposes and urges you to vote against, H.B. No. 6510 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING DUTIES OF DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION OFFICIALS AS PEACE OFFICERS. This bill has apparently been put in because the department has begun to use correction officers to combat street crime; these assignments include undercover task force operations. Some unknown number of correction employees appears to be working under the direction of municipal police departments as well as the state police and federal agencies. This bill broadens correction employee duties significantly. Correction employees are trained to work in institutions, facilities and with the inmate population. This grants powers of arrest to correction employees and has them working with the general public in the community. Correction employees are currently not trained for this. Peace officers should at the least be trained to meet POST (Police Officer Standard Training) certification and have police type firearms training to safely perform their duties. We also want to make sure that if our members are assigned to law enforcement duties amid the state's general population that they will be properly backed up and indemnified if they are involved in a shooting or violent incident. Because of DOC management's current refusal to provide us with basic information about who or how many of our members are being deployed in peace officer-type activities, we feel that the obligation of the employer to bargain impact with our union is not being met.

We urge members of the Judiciary Committee to determine what is meant by the term "official" in the bill. Does "official" mean that the bill intends to restrict peace officer duties to only management level personnel, or does it mean that these duties can be carried out by any correction employee? If the bill is meant to restrict peace officer duties only to management, then what is the rationale for such a request from the legislature?

Our NP-4 union has long advocated for the safety and security our front line prison employees, management, inmates and the public. We hope to work with the administration and your committee to ensure that Connecticut fully protects its employees and the public we serve.

Thank you for your consideration. We are happy to answer any question or provide further information.