



RHODE ISLAND BROTHERHOOD OF CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS

"Representing Those Who Work the Toughest Beat in the State"

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February 12, 2025

Honorable Members
Rhode Island House Labor

Dear Representative:

I am writing to express the Rhode Island Brotherhood of Correctional Officers support H5073. This Legislative Act would set parameters for staffing and running the Rhode Island Department of Corrections. The overtime necessary to maintain critical staffing at our facilities is beyond unacceptable. The RI DOC currently operates six facilities and each facility is short of Correctional Officers, requiring many of the securities regularly force Correctional Officers to work double shifts, several times a week. The men and women who work for the department of Corrections are dedicated professionals who report to work knowing that their 8 hour shift, will more than likely result in an 16 hour stay. The State has failed to recruit a sufficient number of recruits to reverse this dangerous trend.

Mandatory overtime is dangerous, if Correctional Officers refuse they are subject to consequences including disciplinary action (regardless of the reason for the refusal) and the possibility of losing their jobs. This excessive mandatory overtime only adds to an already overworked, burned out and stressed out correctional workforce. This added stress not only impacts the individual officer but can and most likely will, have a detrimental impact on the officer's personal and professional relationships. We are seeing significant numbers of Correctional Officers burning out from the excessive involuntary overtime that are strongly looking at other jobs or considering retirement. Also, the worse the working conditions become, the harder it will be to convince new recruits to sign on, and creating a further problem.

This legislation will give Rhode Island Correctional Officers some protection from forced overtime. This is a security nightmare as much as it is an issue of exploiting Correctional Officers. These shortages also lead to problems within the inmate population, in many cases ordering an entire shift over still does not provide enough staff to safely operate the prison,

causing the inmates to be locked down. This can create a dangerous inmate climate issues within the facilities.

This law will balance the necessity of running safe prisons with the health and rights of Correctional Officers. It is with these facts in mind the RI Brotherhood of Correctional Officers asks for your support on this very important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard Ferruccio". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Richard Ferruccio

President RIBCO