

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the House of Representatives

FROM: Representative Chris Sainato

DATE: April 27, 2011

SUBJECT: Co-sponsorship of legislation – legislation that would amend the definition of “correction officer” to include essential employees (former HB 753)

In the near future, I plan to introduce legislation amending Title 71 (State Government) to include essential Department of Corrections employees and Department of Public Welfare employees in the definition of correction officer. This would entitle them to all of the benefits currently provided to corrections officers under the law, particularly retirement benefits.

Most employees seeking employment in the criminal justice system recognize that verbal and minimal physical abuse from those in their care, custody, and control is a reality of the job. Critical incidents and stressors experienced by employees in correctional, prison, forensic settings include: held hostage, riot, physical/sexual assault, death or serious injury in line of duty, suicide of inmate or employee, use of lethal force on inmate, participation in execution and witness to any of the above. It is not surprising that the level of burnout in this occupation is high. Accordingly, I am offering this legislation so essential Department of Corrections, and Department of Public Welfare employees may retire at the age of 50, as opposed to the current age of 60.

If you would like to join me in co-sponsoring this important legislation, please contact Tracy Kostelac at 772-2436 or via e-mail at tkostela@pahouse.net.