

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

BELLEFONTE COURTHOUSE ANNEX  
THIRD FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM  
BELLEFONTE, PENNSYLVANIA

NOVEMBER 20, 2014

10:00 A.M.

PRESENTATION ON  
PA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS  
STAFFING LEVELS

BEFORE :

HONORABLE RONALD MARSICO, MAJORITY CHAIRMAN  
HONORABLE KERRY A. BENNINGHOFF  
HONORABLE TIM KRIEGER  
HONORABLE MIKE REGAN  
HONORABLE BRYAN BARBIN

1 COMMITTEE STAFF PRESENT:  
2 TOM DYMEK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (R)  
3 DAVE VITALE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (D)  
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3 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: Good morning,  
4 everyone. Welcome to Bellefonte. And I want to thank  
5 the county for having us here today. Thanks for their  
6 hospitality. I'm Representative Marsico, the Chair of  
7 the House Judiciary Committee. And I want to also  
8 acknowledge Representative Benninghoff, who is the  
9 Representative for this area. Kerry is going to make  
10 some comments as well. But I just want to say, thanks  
11 for being here, and welcome.

12 This public hearing is on the issue of  
13 staffing levels for Pennsylvania Department of  
14 Corrections facilities and the impact of those staffing  
15 levels on safety issues.

16 Before we get started, I am going to ask the  
17 members and staff to introduce themselves, starting over  
18 this way.

19 (Introduction of members.)

20 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: Well, thanks  
21 members for being here, and staff as well. We're here  
22 today, as the standing committee of the House of  
23 Representatives with oversight jurisdiction over the  
24 Department of Corrections.

25 Our intent is not to discuss any particular

1 bill, but rather is to hear from both the Department  
2 itself and from certain of its correctional officers to  
3 understand their points of view about appropriate  
4 staffing levels.

5 This issue has come to my attention and to  
6 the Committee's attention following a number of  
7 incidents in the past two years involving violence  
8 against correctional officers and other staff, as well.

9 This also has been an issue about which  
10 Representative Kerry Benninghoff has particular  
11 leadership, has shown particular leadership. We are  
12 pleased to be joined, like I said before, by  
13 Representative Benninghoff, and thank him for arranging  
14 this hearing for us.

15 There's always going to be a certain level  
16 of risk present with working in a correctional facility.  
17 For this reason, the Committee members and the public  
18 are thankful for the service that the correctional  
19 officers and staff and the Department of Corrections  
20 provide.

21 That said, we have an obligation to try to  
22 minimize that risk of harm to the extent possible. I'm  
23 sure that both the Department of Corrections and its  
24 officers share in the goal of achieving a safe work  
25 environment.

1 I'm also sure that both the Department and  
2 its officers, at times, have different ideas on how best  
3 to create that safe work environment. Staffing levels  
4 is one part of that puzzle, and we look forward to  
5 learning more about the topic today.

6 I'm pleased to acknowledge that the  
7 Committee is joined by a group of knowledgeable  
8 testifiers. With us today are several representatives  
9 of the Pennsylvania State Corrections Officer  
10 Association, including Tim Walsh, Jason Bloom, Larry  
11 Blackwell, and James Delbaugh.

12 We're also joined by Ron Bowman, who is a  
13 former corrections officer and a constituent of  
14 Representative Benninghoff.

15 Following, we will hear from Tim Ringler,  
16 who is the Deputy Secretary of Administration for the  
17 Department of Corrections and Tabb Bickel, who is the  
18 Deputy Secretary of the Department's Central Region.  
19 We welcome all of you and look forward to your  
20 testimony.

21 Let me just make two more comments. First,  
22 everyone please be aware that this hearing is being  
23 recorded, as you can see. And second, the Committee  
24 will keep the record open after this hearing in order to  
25 receive written comments from other persons interested

1 in this topic.

2 Also I want to acknowledge  
3 Representative-elect Chris Doosh (phonetic); is that  
4 right?

5 REPRESENTATIVE DUSH: Dush.

6 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: Dush. Sorry  
7 about that. Dush. From Jefferson County, correct?

8 REPRESENTATIVE DUSH: Yes, sir.

9 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: Welcome, and  
10 good luck to you and congratulations on your election.

11 REPRESENTATIVE DUSH: Thanks, Chairman.

12 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: We're going to  
13 begin with the testimony of the Correction Officers  
14 Association, Tim Walsh. I think Tim's going to lead.  
15 Go ahead. You can begin.

16 MR. WALSH: Jason's going to go first.

17 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: You guys decide.

18 MR. BLOOM: We've got a different batting  
19 order. Chairman Marsico, members of the Committee,  
20 thank you for taking the time to hear us on this issue.  
21 My name is Jason Bloom. I'm Vice President of the  
22 PSCOA, Pennsylvania State Corrections Officers  
23 Association, and I'm here to talk on behalf of our  
24 members that Mr. Marsico spoke of that do a very  
25 difficult job inside the prisons.

1           The majority of our members, they want the  
2 opportunity to work some amount of overtime. As  
3 everybody works to make money and pay your bills, it's  
4 nice to make a little bit of extra here and there along  
5 the way.

6           But you've heard the old saying that  
7 sometimes too much of a good thing is a bad thing. And  
8 what I'm talking about in that is in regards to  
9 overtime. Everybody has the opportunity to sign up for  
10 overtime, but we also have another type of overtime  
11 that's called mandatory overtime.

12           And mandatory overtime is you can be working  
13 your 6:00 to 2:00 shift and you have a doctor's  
14 appointment, it's your anniversary, your kid's got a big  
15 ball game, anything; and next thing you know, you're  
16 getting a call saying, you know, Jason, you've been  
17 mandatoried, so now you not only have to deal with the  
18 stresses of inside the institution in the job that you  
19 have, but now you have to make that phone call to tell  
20 the wife, Hey, I'm not coming home or, you know, little  
21 Johnny, good luck with your ball game; I won't be there.  
22 And that's another type of stress that I just don't  
23 think is one that you really want to have in your life.  
24 And it all comes from basically being understaffed.

25           Mandatory overtime is just one stress that



1 we have. A lot of the other stresses that we have, we  
2 have PTSD or post traumatic stress disorder. And we had  
3 Dr. Tudor, who is a recognized leading expert in PTSD  
4 within the correctional field. And I quote as she  
5 notes: Correction staff operate in an environment of  
6 chronic stress, continual alertness, and ever present  
7 possibility of violence.

8 Her research has shown that individuals  
9 working in an environment such as SCI facilities are  
10 prime candidates to be afflicted with PTSD. Along with  
11 those lines, our life expectancy is approximately about  
12 62 years of age or younger. And in the packet there was  
13 an article dealing with a situation in the State of  
14 Kansas.

15 Every day we go into a hostile environment.  
16 We understand the stresses and the risk of the job that  
17 we possess. We go in, we're unarmed, and we're  
18 outnumbered; and we already know that going in.  
19 Unfortunately, at this point, us being outnumbered is  
20 due to more being understaffed, which just increases  
21 that risk that we have.

22 One of the things that I would like to call  
23 your attention to is that understaffing, it leads to  
24 more inmate-on-inmate violence, which we're there for  
25 care, custody, and control.

1                   And also, unfortunately, an incident just  
2 happened in Centre County with the inmate on staff  
3 violence.

4                   That concludes my remarks. I'd like to  
5 introduce -- oh, okay. Timmy Walsh is going to go next.  
6 Sorry. Thank you.

7                   MR. WALSH: Good morning, Chairman Marsico,  
8 members of the Committee. My name is Tim Walsh, and I  
9 have the distinct pleasure of serving as the PSCOA  
10 Executive Vice President. Thank you once again for  
11 giving us the opportunity to share with you our  
12 perspective on the current staffing challenges our  
13 members are dealing with on a daily basis.

14                   We understand the pressures that Secretary  
15 Wetzel is under to contain the costs associated with the  
16 SCI operations, but the hiring freeze that had been  
17 imposed upon him and his department lasted too long; and  
18 the pace of new hires since the freeze was lifted is too  
19 slow.

20                   Today, all of our SCI facilities are  
21 operating below the Department's own staffing  
22 projections, way low.

23                   It would be prudent for the legislature to  
24 take a hard look at the numbers behind the DOC  
25 operations, look at things like, what is the current

1 deviation from the Manpower staffing survey to the  
2 actual numbers of C01's, C02's and, yes, C03's positions  
3 within each SCI facility. Now, I say C03's, because  
4 many times what they do is they rob Peter to pay Paul.  
5 They take our members who are C02's and work them into a  
6 classification of C03, which is technically management,  
7 but it's a temporary thing that they steel from our  
8 ranks, which leaves us depleted even more.

9           For each of the past five years what has  
10 been expended in overtime for each of the past five  
11 years what has been the number of incidents involving  
12 inmate-on-inmate violence and inmate-on-guard violence.

13           We would be happy to work with you and the  
14 Committee staff in developing questions that would allow  
15 for an empirical evaluation of staffing levels inside  
16 the walls of the SCI facilities.

17           We know they are doing their best to reduce  
18 expenses, but continuing to understaff our SCI  
19 facilities may be penny-wise but pound foolish. If you  
20 look back at past disturbances that have occurred at SCI  
21 facilities, a common cause often identified as a  
22 significant contributing factor was understaffing.

23           A collection of articles, which reported on  
24 the Camp Hill Prison riot are attached for your review.  
25 As you will see, understaffing is identified as a

1 significant cause that contributed to the violence that  
2 broke out. Other disturbance also occurred at  
3 Huntingdon, Graterford, and just up the road at  
4 Rockview. There's even an article on a recent  
5 disturbance that occurred in England, also related to  
6 critical understaffing.

7           How much did those disturbances cost the  
8 state? I don't know. But I can assure you that it was  
9 much, much more than what was saved through  
10 understaffing. Having enough well-trained correctional  
11 staff is essential behind those walls and razor wire.

12           We are the eyes and ears of the state  
13 correction system. A final concern of the excessive use  
14 of overtime, both voluntary and mandatory, is the pay  
15 disparity that it causes between those below supervisory  
16 roles and those in a supervisory position.

17           As you have heard in the past, it is now  
18 common for our members to earn more than their  
19 supervisors who do not get overtime pay. This often  
20 leads to tension between the supervisors and their  
21 employees. Further, it makes promoting from within the  
22 ranks extremely difficult because of the effective pay  
23 differential.

24           There has to be a point where hiring more  
25 corrections officers is more cost efficient than the

1 continued excessive use of overtime. If we learned  
2 anything from our past history, leaving our SCI  
3 facilities chronically understaffed will cost the state  
4 much more in injuries to our members and the repair in  
5 replacing damaged property. It is imperative that our  
6 state hires more corrections officers now. Larry?

7 Thank you.

8 MR. BLACKWELL: Good morning, Chairman  
9 Marsico, and panel. Thank you for the opportunity to  
10 present this issue to you.

11 SCI Rockview is my home institution. I was  
12 a sergeant there until 2009, and I'm currently on a  
13 leave of absence as a business agent for the PSCOA. The  
14 institutions I represent are Rockview, SCI Benner, SCI  
15 Houtzdale, and Quehanna Boot Camp. I started with the  
16 DOC in 1994 at Rockview, and also worked at SCI  
17 Pittsburgh from '99 until 2003.

18 The first step in our force continuum is  
19 presence, and the DOC's tried to replace that with  
20 cameras. The only thing that cameras are good for is  
21 seeing what happens after the fact. I've been involved  
22 in staffing surveys since 2003, and I have witnessed the  
23 reduction of officers while the inmate population  
24 continues to grow.

25 In 1994, SCI Rockview housed around 1800

1 inmates and the current housing averages 2,350. As you  
2 look at the numbers and review the vacancy report,  
3 you'll see that the officer-to-inmate ratio is a lot  
4 higher than the DOC reports. As you review the numbers  
5 of officers on the housing unit, one thing to keep in  
6 mind, and I have provided them, they're actually right  
7 after my testimony. One thing to keep in mind is that  
8 there are fewer officers on the housing units during the  
9 meal relief times, and that was the unfortunate time  
10 that the rape incident happened at SCI Rockview. The  
11 inmates aren't stupid. They know when we're going to  
12 have less staff on the units, and many of the units at  
13 Rockview are still self-relieved, sometimes losing one  
14 officer, sometimes in the bigger housing units losing  
15 two.

16 On May 27, 2014, the Commonwealth initiated  
17 a hiring freeze that brought great stress on the  
18 officers by forcing them to work mandatory overtime on a  
19 regular basis. The hiring freeze put the DOC in severe  
20 safety risk. The vacancies are not being filled. And  
21 when it gets lifted, the DOC, the officers take  
22 approximately six months before they're trained and  
23 comfortable enough to even work any of the overtime.

24 Other issues with implementing the hiring  
25 freeze for the officers is having the new hires all at

1 one time creates an unsafe environment. Whenever we  
2 lifted -- after the rape incident at Rockview, we  
3 initiated a huge hiring, and now we're trying to train  
4 70 people. And, you know, at SCI Benner, we have, you  
5 know, 120 trainees, and what happens is they train each  
6 other. And instead of being around seasoned veteran  
7 officers, when we hire them all at one time, it creates  
8 an unsafe environment.

9 We need to take a serious look at the  
10 staffing numbers and ask ourselves what the effects are  
11 of a hiring freeze in the DOC. The staffing numbers  
12 that the DOC uses are including non-uniformed staff. I  
13 could tell you, in 20 years in corrections, I have never  
14 seen a non-uniformed staff provide assistance during a  
15 disturbance or subdue an inmate. I have, however, seen  
16 them go into their office and shut the door and they  
17 want nothing to do with security of the inmates.

18 I know that my presence here can easily be  
19 twisted into being a greedy union representative who  
20 just wants more for its members and put money in his own  
21 pockets. I'm telling you that what I ask for here today  
22 has already been done by the DOC; they call it a  
23 Manpower Staffing Survey, and the survey sets a standard  
24 on how many corrections officer staff is needed  
25 throughout the day every day.





1 There's three of them. And you can see we have some  
2 inmates -- that's what the dining hall looks like when  
3 you're feeding them. Again, in the dining hall, there's  
4 four corrections officers working the dining hall with  
5 approximately 320 inmates in there at one time, with  
6 four C.O.'s.

7           During main line, during yard facilities,  
8 that's when all the inmates are allowed out of their  
9 cell at the same time. And if you look at the rosters  
10 that are provided to you, you'll understand there's only  
11 50 corrections officers on duty at this time.

12           This is another idea of the state. They  
13 took a furniture factory and transformed it into a  
14 housing unit. This is a warehouse for inmates. This is  
15 a very dangerous situation. Two corrections officers  
16 work here with over 210 inmates that are housed in this  
17 birthing area.

18           We tried, through the Manpower Survey, have  
19 our input and try to have additional staff. The  
20 Commonwealth ended up taking a third officer, and now  
21 it's a two-man post rather than a three-man post. That  
22 was their wisdom. The bargaining unit complained about  
23 it, said it was understaffing, and they took the third  
24 one away from us; now it's a two-officer post with over  
25 200 inmates.

1           We're going to go into a housing unit. This  
2 is what a housing unit looks like. Again, 127 to 131  
3 inmates. Some are single-celled, some are  
4 double-celled. One corrections officer runs the  
5 day-to-day operation. We're fortunate. We do have a  
6 sergeant that rolls between the blocks, but he's tied up  
7 on one side with 127 inmates. There's no one on the  
8 other side. Thank you.

9           My concern is the mandatory overtime. Early  
10 October, we had an officer that was mandated to be there  
11 on the 6:00 to 2:00 shift and there was an inmate that  
12 had attempted murder on him. It hit the newspapers, so  
13 you guys should be aware of that.

14           I have some information. I can share it  
15 with the panel. But I broke down, in the last two  
16 weeks, so it's current, so you guys see what's current.  
17 From 11/10 through 11/16, we had -- on 11/10, for  
18 example, we had 83 officers on overtime in one day.  
19 Sixty-one of those officers were mandated to be there  
20 when they weren't supposed to be there, when they should  
21 have been home with their family. That's 73 percent of  
22 the people that were on overtime were mandated.

23           All the way down as current as 11/16, we had  
24 63 people on overtime; 40 of them were mandated for 63  
25 percent of the workforce on mandatory overtime.

1           We have Manpower Surveys that were supplied  
2 by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. We're 31 short on  
3 Coal Township corrections officers. I have minutes from  
4 labor management that go back a year complaining about  
5 our short staffing. It fell on deaf ears. We're  
6 projected -- we're not projected, we are actually  
7 spending over \$14,000 a day on overtime, gentlemen, a  
8 day, on overtime. It's a concern, not just because I'm  
9 a corrections officer and safety, I'm concerned as a  
10 civil servant and as a resident of Pennsylvania.

11           The projections for this year on overtime is  
12 astronomical. We need help from your committee to  
13 address these. They have a Manpower Survey, they don't  
14 go by it, and they short staff and they mandate  
15 everybody.

16           I have minutes that reflect that they said,  
17 and I quote, It's cheaper to hire overtime than it is to  
18 hire someone off the street. We don't see it that way.  
19 We're asking for some help. Any paperwork that the  
20 Committee would need, I can provide.

21           I have one more thing, if I may? If I may?  
22 I have an equalization sheet, which you guys will really  
23 be interested in. It's a six-month equalization. We  
24 keep track of the officers who are working the overtime  
25 and how much overtime they get.

1           We have one officer that's 900 hours of  
2 overtime from July until the current day. These were  
3 printed yesterday from management of Coal Township and  
4 given to me. They will not -- let me excuse myself  
5 here. They will piggy-back what we're saying today.  
6 They know we're short. To have 400, 800, 600, 300, 400,  
7 500, 548, 836, 492 overtime hours just to touch the  
8 highlights from July till now, that's not fiscally  
9 sound.

10           And I have also a scan report from Coal  
11 Township where it shows that major contraband fines and  
12 assaults are up at our facility. As Mr. Walsh said, the  
13 inmates aren't dumb. They see the same people all the  
14 time leaning on the wall, perhaps dozing off for 5  
15 seconds or 15 seconds. That's when they act out.

16           We're asking the Committee to really look at  
17 this, the money, the understaffing, and help us with it.

18           I thank you for your time, gentlemen.

19           MR. WALSH: That concludes our testimony.  
20 We're open for any questions.

21           MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: Okay. Yeah,  
22 thank you very much. And you've thrown a lot of  
23 information at us here. I'm looking through my notes.  
24 I had some questions I wanted to ask, but -- but going  
25 back to that presentation you made, the video slide, you

1 showed an area where there's -- a bay area, all the  
2 bunks, right?

3 MR. DELBAUGH: Yes, sir.

4 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: 127, I thought  
5 you said.

6 MR. DELBAUGH: 210 inmates.

7 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: 210. And then  
8 how many CO's?

9 MR. DELBAUGH: Two corrections officers.

10 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: Two. Now, that  
11 area, is that a minimum security area? Why do they have  
12 that many inmates in such a large area in sort of like a  
13 bay area? Do you know?

14 MR. DELBAUGH: Yes, sir. Yes, sir. They  
15 call it minimum security. We have level two and level  
16 three inmates in there.

17 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: Okay. So you  
18 said, minimum security. Is that what you said?

19 MR. DELBAUGH: Medium security.

20 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: Medium. Okay.  
21 All right. I have other questions, but I'll just have  
22 to find my notes here. Does anyone else have questions?  
23 Representative Regan.

24 REPRESENTATIVE REGAN: Thank you. Good  
25 morning. Just a quick question: Is there any

1 regulations that mandate or limit the amount of overtime  
2 hours that can be worked in a week? Or maybe a better  
3 way to put it, is there any mandatory rest period  
4 between shifts?

5 MR. DELBAUGH: No.

6 REPRESENTATIVE REGAN: So you could be asked  
7 to work overtime, mandatory overtime, and you go right  
8 from one shift to another shift?

9 MR. DELBAUGH: Yes.

10 REPRESENTATIVE REGAN: You could work up to  
11 24 hours; is that correct?

12 MR. BLACKWELL: Not necessarily. Although  
13 I'm sure the Commonwealth might want to argue with me.  
14 But technically they can mandate us for 24 hours. But  
15 we're not allowed to even volunteer for three  
16 consecutive shifts. And like I said, it's a bit of gray  
17 area; so technically if they needed it in an emergency  
18 type situation, sure, they could mandate you for 24  
19 hours, 8 after 8 after 8.

20 But, typically speaking, on a voluntary type  
21 basis, we can only work a double, we can't work triples.

22 REPRESENTATIVE REGAN: Okay. So you  
23 mentioned a person who worked 900 hours between July and  
24 today. How many of those were mandatory and how many  
25 were voluntary? Do you know?

1           MR. DELBAUGH: I don't have that information  
2 as far as mandatory hours, Representative. I can get  
3 that for you. Some of them are -- if the guy's working  
4 16 hours a day, it's very hard to mandate him because  
5 he's there already. So the guys that volunteer all the  
6 time don't get very many mandates. Men that want to go  
7 home to their families are the ones that get mandated  
8 all the time. They want to do their 8 hours and go home  
9 to their family, they're the ones who keep getting  
10 mandated. If that clears some of it up.

11           REPRESENTATIVE REGAN: It does. And I come  
12 from law enforcement, and I am very sympathetic to the  
13 safety issue, which I think is completely valid and very  
14 concerning. I think it probably is to the Committee.

15           However, you know, stress, PTSD, being  
16 unarmed, if you guys went into this job with your eyes  
17 wide open, you realize that this is what you were going  
18 to be doing, correct?

19           MR. BLOOM: Correct.

20           REPRESENTATIVE REGAN: This is, you know,  
21 some of the problems that you would encounter as someone  
22 who goes to a prison.

23           MR. DELBAUGH: Sure. We're not naive. We  
24 know we're in a dangerous environment, and we know that  
25 a lot of the things they've done over the years to

1 reduce staff, say, like cameras, they're fine and  
2 everything, give us a good picture of us getting our  
3 butt kicked.

4 REPRESENTATIVE REGAN: Yeah.

5 MR. BLACKWELL: But other than that, they  
6 don't respond. And that's why bodies, fresh bodies, are  
7 really what we're looking for. And like Jason noted to  
8 earlier is that sure our guys want to make money, of  
9 course, who doesn't want to make a little more money.  
10 But it only goes so far, you know. We'd like to see  
11 them at least meet their minimum standards, which I'm  
12 sure we'll dispute their numbers later. But they have  
13 to even admit that they don't meet their minimum  
14 numbers.

15 REPRESENTATIVE REGAN: Okay.

16 MR. BLACKWELL: They're far below.

17 REPRESENTATIVE REGAN: Okay. Gotcha.  
18 Thanks for your testimony.

19 MR. BLACKWELL: Thank you.

20 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: Representative  
21 Barbin.

22 REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: Do you have minimum  
23 work standards for each of the last five years? Do you  
24 know what the numbers were for each of the five years in  
25 the past? And what information can you give us to show



1 if this is a recent problem or it's a problem that just  
2 got progressively worse?

3 MR. BLACKWELL: Yes, we have that  
4 information. We have a Manpower Analysis on every  
5 institution that tells us the required positions for  
6 correction officer ones, for example, and then required  
7 positions for correction officer two's.

8 And that, with our current, I call it a  
9 shift tree, how many people we actually have working,  
10 the difference of becomes a vacancy sheet. And I have  
11 several vacancy sheets that show that, you know, we're  
12 16 down at Houtzdale, 24 at Rockview, and 21 at SCI  
13 Benner.

14 REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: And what I'm asking  
15 I guess is, does the State provide numbers that you have  
16 access to? Where can we get total numbers of what the  
17 employment was over the last three or five years so that  
18 we could actually look at this problem in a historical  
19 sort of perspective?

20 MR. WALSH: You're probably most likely  
21 going to have to get that from the Department.

22 REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: One other question:  
23 Has anyone looked at the issue of what the pension cost  
24 will be? Because any time you -- you know, you do  
25 mandatory overtime to any significant amount, and I'm

1 assuming it's significant if during a year you might  
2 work 2000 hours and if somebody in just the last six  
3 months had another 900 hours, that has to be a pension  
4 cost problem. Because the way our pension system is set  
5 up, is if you work for three years with overtime, you're  
6 going to go from having a salary, the way I understand  
7 it, the salary includes overtime.

8 MR. WALSH: Yes.

9 REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: So if you were  
10 making \$60,000 a year, but you had mandatory overtime  
11 you had to take, and now you're at \$100,000 and you're  
12 at 80 percent because you've worked 30 years, then what  
13 you've really done is increase the pension cost for  
14 every individual by something -- somewhere in the nature  
15 of 25 percent.

16 They did an article in the Harrisburg  
17 Patriot News last year about what the understaffing  
18 overtime costs were, and they found that the amount of  
19 people that were making over \$100,000 in pension costs  
20 was increasing by another 500 people. Has any analysis  
21 like that been done for the corrections system?

22 MR. WALSH: Once again, I think that  
23 question would probably better asked of the Department.  
24 We are obviously aware of such a thing and many of our  
25 members do take advantage of something like that.

1           REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: So when you're given  
2 testimony that says, we know that we've been told by the  
3 administration that it's less expensive to have overtime  
4 than it is to hire the staffing level, which the sheet  
5 says they should have, that doesn't include the issue of  
6 pensions?

7           MR. WALSH: No. Generally, I believe the  
8 excuse, if you will, that they give us is that medical  
9 benefits and that kind of thing adds to the cost.

10           REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: It's just medical  
11 benefits, it's not pension?

12           MR. WALSH: I'm not sure. You'd have to ask  
13 them.

14           REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: And I think we  
15 should be looking at the pension costs, as well. But  
16 thank you, Mr. Chairman.

17           MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: Representative  
18 Benninghoff, questions?

19           REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: Thank you, Mr.  
20 Chairman. Again, thank you for bringing the Committee  
21 here to Centre County. One of the things I've said to  
22 the Chairman is we kind of have a unique situation here  
23 where we have a facility that's over a hundred years old  
24 and we have a new prototype facility, and I think that  
25 gives some good dynamics for us to reserve and to

1 review.

2 I have a couple of quick questions here.  
3 You had talked about some of the numbers in different  
4 prisons. I know the complements here in Centre County  
5 are going up. I think you said 120 at Benner; 70 at  
6 Rockview.

7 The question is, and I think some of it was  
8 discovered in the last six months is, are we getting the  
9 training to these individuals? Are we providing the  
10 time for the training, or are we so busy trying to get  
11 warm bodies in the cells to be watching these guys, are  
12 we not having the time for the training?

13 MR. BLACKWELL: We are having them seen by a  
14 training sergeant once a day. But what happens when you  
15 have so many new hires, like I discussed, we would -- at  
16 SCI Benner, for example, because we got a mass influx  
17 because they -- you know, opening of that facility, that  
18 ten out of the ten officers in the yard were all phase  
19 two trainees.

20 And phase two means that they were in the  
21 first nine weeks of their cycle of training. So they  
22 had been employed by the DOC for a month and-a-half to  
23 two months. And so the training sergeant would go see  
24 them during the day, not necessarily all out in the  
25 yard. But he would see them, review an objective with

1    them and then leave; because he has a lot of other ones  
2    to see as well.

3                    So, like I said, what you have, then those  
4    ten go to those dining halls that we saw. Benner's not  
5    a lot different than what the set up was at Coal  
6    Township; they have three dining halls. Now we have  
7    three CO1's with under two months of experience  
8    altogether in that dining hall.

9                    Then the next dining hall, we have three  
10   CO1's with two months experience and so on to staff the  
11   three. So, again, when you do the mass hiring like  
12   that, that's what the residual effect is.

13                   REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: Is technology  
14   making it any better? I know when our county decided to  
15   build a new prison here, you know, the old dialogue was,  
16   do you build something that's four stories high or do  
17   you make it broader and a lot of it had to do with the  
18   site and availability to observe things, and so they  
19   come up with this pod idea and the utilization of  
20   technology, you know, power locking doors, so the  
21   average person who doesn't work in your industry it  
22   seemed logical to me that the utilization of technology  
23   is helping to enhance that and maybe minimizing the need  
24   for an exact same complement of bodies working that we  
25   would have had in a prison like Rockview.

1           MR. WALSH: Yeah, but there's no doubt that  
2 newer facilities and line of sight, really simple  
3 things, not even the technology, definitely allows them  
4 to staff at lower levels than what would be some of the  
5 older institutions.

6           REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: Okay. And last  
7 question. This is something on behalf of my  
8 constituents. We hear this over and over, especially  
9 those who have been around here a long time is, are we  
10 causing ourselves more problems by not having inmates  
11 engaged in more work details?

12           Now, I'm old school, and I would love to get  
13 the old farms back up and running and things. But I  
14 know mathematically a lot of people are tell me this is  
15 not financially feasible.

16           But it seems as though idle time allows a  
17 lot of time to come up with not very good ideas. And  
18 so, you know, is the complement of inmates not doing  
19 manual labor? You know, I joke, but I come from a  
20 family of five. My dad had five acres of grass. As  
21 long as you didn't buy power clippers, you had lots of  
22 things for kids to do. And by the time the day was  
23 over, I was glad to go to bed.

24           And I kind of feel the same analogy with  
25 inmates, that maybe we're having too much idle time.

1     Should we be getting the work industries growing better  
2     and allowing them to be doing something, one, that's  
3     constructive and gives them a trade when they get out of  
4     here, hopefully, because like Secretary Wetzel says, 90  
5     percent of these guys get turned back to the streets.

6             Is that something we need to look at as a  
7     Committee to better utilize these people's time to be  
8     increased in internal industries?

9             MR. BLACKWELL: I agree with you. And I'm  
10    sure if retired Officer Bowman testifies later, I think  
11    like when I started in 1994, without using an  
12    exaggerated number, there was 350 inmates working  
13    outside the gate at SCI Rockview, and that dynamic has  
14    changed.

15            We've closed down the upholstery factory or  
16    just an upholstery shop that employed about 12 inmates  
17    that took some pride in their work, but we said there  
18    was no vocational growth out in the street, so we just  
19    did away with the job.

20            And we do have more idle time for the  
21    inmates and, you know, idle time is not good for anyone,  
22    you know. So, yeah, I definitely believe that taking a  
23    look at that could be beneficial.

24            MR. DELBAUGH: And at Coal Township, as you  
25    saw, that birthing area, that was a furniture factory.

1 We made podiums, drawers, tables. Seventy inmates were  
2 employed; now nobody's employed. So I would definitely  
3 piggy-back what Larry says. We need something for them  
4 to do. Keeping them locked up in a cell and letting  
5 them out to eat, only to eat or go to the yard, that's  
6 not good; there's a lot of idle time on their hands.

7 So, Mr. Benninghoff, I would agree with you  
8 on that one. We got to find something for them to do.  
9 And I work in the facility.

10 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: Thank you. And  
11 thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: Representative  
13 Krieger.

14 REPRESENTATIVE KRIEGER: Thank you, Mr.  
15 Chairman. Two questions: You mentioned getting  
16 inexperience, and certainly we can appreciate that you  
17 get a bunch of young people doing this job. There's an  
18 art to it, as well as a science, and there's some  
19 experience that's necessary. How do we fix that? If  
20 the answer here is we need to hire more guards to  
21 alleviate these questions, and aren't we going to  
22 inevitably hire inexperienced people?

23 MR. BLACKWELL: The answer to that is that  
24 it's an evolving process. And the way we've done it  
25 until we implemented these hiring freezes, was that we



1 would -- as people would leave, we would replace them.  
2 But what we do now is they, you know, the local managers  
3 are requesting to fill the positions; and the bigger  
4 part of the Department of Corrections is saying, no, you  
5 don't -- you can't hire them right now. So then what we  
6 have is the effect of, okay, a year from now we're going  
7 to lift the freeze and we're going to hire 70 people all  
8 at one time. So we need to fill the positions as they  
9 are vacated, according to the survey.

10 I said, if it's a needed 268 CO1 positions,  
11 I have a CO1 retire, I replace a CO1. Next week I  
12 replace another CO1.

13 MR. WALSH: I just want to point out, and  
14 you might be familiar with this, is that just a little  
15 over a year ago, they closed two prisons, Cresson and  
16 SCI Greene. And sure, if you look at the numbers, you  
17 might be led to believe that, well, of course, they're  
18 going to be down 500, 600 staff because of those two  
19 prisons closing. Well, nothing can be further from the  
20 truth.

21 Those two institutions, the majority of the  
22 staff there were absorbed by institutions around them.  
23 Some of them were well over complement. One in  
24 particular, SCI Pine Grove, as I speak here today, I  
25 know for a fact they're 11 CO's short. They were well

1 over the complement 18 months ago because of that. And  
2 that story I can tell you over and over again.

3 Part of what we did to gather information  
4 prior to coming here today, as I surveyed all of my  
5 business agents at our 26 institutions, and I asked  
6 them, Where are we at? I want surveys, and then I want  
7 to know exactly what our vacancies are.

8 And, on average, we're 20 people short.  
9 Some are 40. Some, like I said, at Pine Grove are 11.  
10 So it's not because of those two institutions closing.

11 I just wanted to clear that up. Thank you.

12 REPRESENTATIVE KRIEGER: If I could follow  
13 up. You mentioned Pine Grove. You said, what, a year  
14 and-a-half ago it was 18 up and now it's 11 down; is  
15 that correct?

16 MR. WALSH: That would be a good example, I  
17 believe.

18 REPRESENTATIVE KRIEGER: How's that happen?  
19 How does that happen?

20 MR. BLACKWELL: Through retirements and  
21 transfers and, you know, just through vacancies.

22 REPRESENTATIVE KRIEGER: Okay. All right.  
23 One final question, if I could. Mandatory overtime: Do  
24 you have any figures, say, as to the total overtime,  
25 what percentage of it is mandatory versus voluntary?

1                   MR. DELBAUGH: I can share Coal Township's  
2 mandatory overtime for the last two weeks. I wanted to  
3 get current information for you, Mr. Krieger. I got  
4 current information for two weeks. I can present it to  
5 you. I'll give you a copy of it from 11/3 through  
6 11/16, where anywhere from 52 corrections officers all  
7 the way to 83 were on overtime; and anywhere from 22 to  
8 61 were mandatory overtime. I have broken down a  
9 percentage on shift and everything, if you'd like to  
10 have a copy of it.

11                   REPRESENTATIVE KREIGER: If we could, and  
12 perhaps for the Department when we come to their  
13 testimony. I think it would be helpful if we got that  
14 for statewide, just to present it.

15                   Okay. Thank you.

16                   MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: Representative  
17 Regan, Question?

18                   REPRESENTATIVE REGAN: Yes. Thank you, Mr.  
19 Chairman, for your indulgence. Guys, do you receive any  
20 additional safety training that prepares you for being  
21 short staffed on any shift or on any special  
22 circumstances?

23                   MR. BLACKWELL: No.

24                   REPRESENTATIVE REGAN: So I would imagine  
25 that if you were going to do it one way full staff,

1     there would certainly be another way if you're short  
2     staffed.  So you're not given any kind of training or  
3     anything that prepares you to be instead of four men,  
4     two men?

5             MR. WALSH:  No.  In fact, one of the things  
6     I know we've asked at several different times because  
7     this is an ongoing process, is that, well, if you're  
8     going to cut back on the staff, at least curtail the  
9     inmate programs.  And, obviously, that's not part of  
10    what we do.  But, no, that doesn't seem to happen  
11    either.  So, yes, we make do with less.

12            REPRESENTATIVE REGAN:  Thank you.

13            MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO:  Okay.  Any other  
14    questions?  Just going back to that question I asked you  
15    before about the area, the bay area, with the medium  
16    security area.

17            MR. DELBAUGH:  Yes, sir.

18            MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO:  Have there been  
19    any incidents there of violence or any issues or  
20    problems there in the last year or two?

21            MR. DELBAUGH:  Yes, sir.  We have fights.  
22    Luckily, no staff assaults, but we have fights there all  
23    the time, just like any other housing unit.  We respond  
24    a little different because there's no door to shut them  
25    in.

1 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: So what would  
2 you recommend in terms of -- how many more COs would you  
3 recommend there at that facility?

4 MR. DELBAUGH: Two more CO's and a sergeant.  
5 We need a sergeant in our housing. Everyone else has a  
6 sergeant. We requested an additional -- we had a  
7 sergeant there, and they retaliated by taking a sergeant  
8 away.

9 The sergeant can be -- when somebody's doing  
10 paperwork and somebody's doing -- watching the monitors,  
11 there's nobody to walk around and check the inmates to  
12 see if they're making weapons, gambling, fighting, or  
13 the other thing; the most dangerous thing inside a  
14 facility, raping or anything like that.

15 We have nobody there to do that. Because  
16 once a CO has their face down doing paperwork, doing  
17 passes, the other guys are monitoring on camera. We  
18 need at least four and a sergeant.

19 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: How many other  
20 institutions are set up that way in the state? Do you  
21 know?

22 MR. BLACKWELL: Most of them have added this  
23 temporary style housing, and they call it -- again, they  
24 call it minimum security housing. However, a lot of  
25 that is manipulated by the paperwork that's done to get

1 them there.

2 I mean, we could have a minimum security  
3 inmate that's doing life that had a misconduct a year  
4 ago for assaulting another inmate, and they just pencil  
5 whip him down.

6 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: So you're saying  
7 minimum -- earlier you said medium.

8 MR. BLACKWELL: Medium.

9 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: So is it minimum  
10 or medium?

11 MR. DELBAUGH: It depends what facility  
12 you're are at and how many level threes. If they're  
13 level threes, sir, they'll be a medium; level two is a  
14 minimum.

15 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: Okay. Gotcha.

16 MR. BLACKWELL: And I was just speaking of  
17 some of the other dorm style housing, that's what --

18 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: Okay. All  
19 right. Gotcha. Any other questions? I don't see any  
20 other questions at this time, but I just want to thank  
21 you very much for being here and providing us this  
22 information.

23 And I can tell you, we're going to continue  
24 the discussions. And the Committee will do that as we  
25 get together again next session, etc. So we're not

1 finished with this. So I want you to know we will  
2 continue investigating your testimony and we'll do more  
3 research, as well.

4 So thank you very much for your time and for  
5 what you do for the Commonwealth. I appreciate it.

6 MR. WALSH: Thank you.

7 MR. DELBAUGH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

8 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: Next to testify  
9 is -- before we -- I want to acknowledge, too, we have  
10 been joined by our host county commissioners. I'm going  
11 to butcher these names, I'm sure. Chris Exarchos. I  
12 told you I would butcher it. And the other one is  
13 Commissioner Steve Dershem; is that correct?

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Welcome to Centre  
15 County.

16 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: Well, thank you  
17 for having us here. I appreciate that.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We're honored to have  
19 you. Now we get to go back to work. Thank you very  
20 much.

21 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: Thank you. Have  
22 fun. Next to testify is Ron Bowman. Ron is a retired  
23 corrections officer. Ron, do you want to come forward  
24 and begin your testimony?

25 MR. BOWMAN: Sure. Can you hear me okay?

1 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: Yes. Go ahead.

2 MR. BOWMAN: I apologize. I'm not as  
3 organized as the last speakers.

4 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: That's all  
5 right.

6 MR. BOWMAN: I'll introduce myself. Ron  
7 Bowman, 27 and-a-half years as a corrections officer.  
8 I'd like to think -- I know I have more experience than  
9 the officers that just spoke. And I will say as much in  
10 my notes that I took and have taken.

11 I was up all night. I didn't get much  
12 sleep. I was taking input from other corrections  
13 officers and other correctional staff, not just  
14 officers, to include retired management.

15 Twenty-seven and-a-half years and there's  
16 officers that retired before me that I talked to about  
17 this before I came here today.

18 The only thing that has changed at SCI  
19 Rockview since it was built, and it was built with  
20 inmate labor supervised by staff, the only thing that  
21 has changed is management itself. And, of course, in  
22 the last few years back, the union changed.

23 And there's times where union is part of the  
24 problem and not part of the answer. The union came here  
25 today and asked for more staffing, more staffing; that's



1 all I heard. I've never in the past have heard the  
2 union complain about overtime, but the union addressed  
3 overtime.

4 In my early years in the Department of  
5 Corrections, the officers begged for overtime. I  
6 started at \$7.70 an hour. The older officers would say,  
7 Ron, why are you working our overtime? They wanted to  
8 build their pensions up, as you spoke about earlier. I  
9 said, I need it for my family. I got a family.

10 You know, I come here today -- I don't want  
11 to be here. I'm here today for the taxpayers. I'm here  
12 for the staff that are still in there working, you know.  
13 And I'd like to think, also, I'm here for the inmates.

14 We speak of the staff assaults. Inmates are  
15 being assaulted left and right. They go through the  
16 back on the list here of staff assaults and inmate  
17 assaults. Well, a lot of times inmates don't report the  
18 assaults. They don't feel they have an avenue.

19 You know, they spoke of the officers working  
20 the overtime, the officers are tired, just move on down  
21 the line. I'm sorry to say that happens. And I  
22 apologize about bouncing around here today.

23 When I spoke of the overtime, the staff  
24 wanted the overtime back then; they begged for it. You  
25 didn't have to mandate; they wanted the overtime. I

1 don't know for sure, but I believe the superintendents  
2 back then received bonuses for running the prisons  
3 efficiently. It just didn't happen. You never heard of  
4 a mandate. People wanted the overtime. Today, people  
5 don't want to work the overtime because of unsafe  
6 conditions.

7           When the union comes to you and address  
8 staffing, staffing, staffing, staffing is not always the  
9 answer. The officers need to be backed by their  
10 management staff. The officers need tools.

11           When the union spoke of, cameras aren't the  
12 answer; it only records the problem, cameras can be a  
13 deterrent to actions in the prison, also. In the dining  
14 hall, I'll never forget -- when they first put the  
15 cameras in the dining hall, I thought, cool, this is  
16 great, you know. Management would be able to look out  
17 here and see what's going on, also.

18           There's nothing worse than being in a  
19 situation where you're, one, by yourself with maybe ten  
20 other inmates and it's turning on you and all of sudden  
21 you see another officer. That's very comforting to see  
22 another staff member in uniform.

23           The union spoke of post-traumatic stress  
24 disorder. An officer that retired shortly after me, he  
25 was severely beaten and assaulted where he was helping a

1 non-uniformed staff member; and he truly does suffer  
2 from post-traumatic stress. He's been on medication. I  
3 feel bad for him. You know, staff aren't just injured  
4 physically, sometimes it's mentally. I got out without  
5 a scratch, and I'm very thankful. I'm thankful for my  
6 job.

7           And in no way do I want to ruin my  
8 children's chances at the opportunities I've had. Good  
9 benefits; good retirement. I got out when I did because  
10 it was just enough. There's staff right now that are  
11 retiring early taking a penalty because they just can't  
12 handle it anymore, you know.

13           And it's hard for a man to say you're  
14 scared. Hard for women to say they're scared, I'm sure.  
15 I'm speaking for myself. There's times in a  
16 correctional setting where you're scared, and you look  
17 down the hall and there is no other staff.

18           But there's implements, there's tools; and  
19 one of them is pepper spray. These are things that the  
20 union should be asking for, not just staffing, staffing,  
21 staffing. Staffing is more money for the union, also; I  
22 understand that.

23           Pepper spray: Years ago, they started with  
24 pepper spray. Every staff member should carry a little  
25 can of -- I think now some of the other jails are

1 utilizing this. It's a tool; it's nonlethal. If an  
2 inmate takes it from you and sprays you in the face with  
3 it, you're going to survive; you're going to go home to  
4 your family. That same inmate picks up a chair and  
5 smashes you over the head, you might not be so lucky.

6 I'll take a minute to look at my notes. As  
7 the union mentioned, the riots in 1989: Camp Hill, SCI  
8 Rockview, SCI Huntingdon. They failed to mention SCI  
9 Coal Township. Coal Township was a new jail, new  
10 management, new staff. I don't know what their numbers  
11 were, but it was bad management that allowed a situation  
12 to get out of hand.

13 There's changes that need to be had in the  
14 Department of Corrections, and you can't do it  
15 overnight. That's what really happened at Camp Hill.  
16 You had management that were trying to change things.

17 The commissioner, at that time, I won't put  
18 names out there, he was released right away after the  
19 riots. The riots actually happened, they secured a  
20 jail, so they thought, and management made a decision  
21 that we have this under control. The cells weren't  
22 secured. But staff went right in there; that's their  
23 job.

24 Some of you mentioned that, you know, you  
25 take the job knowing this. You know, when I started, we

1 had a facility we were proud of. You know, we had a  
2 superintendent that backed us.

3 I'm going to give you one example: I'm one  
4 of the founding fathers of Pennsylvania State  
5 Corrections Officers Association, the association before  
6 it was a union. We didn't start it to be a union; we  
7 started it to be a voice for corrections officers, and  
8 corrections officers alone, not maintenance officers.  
9 It's just how it was.

10 And it started from a union when we had  
11 AFSCME. A group of us got together and we even turned  
12 on the union and said, Geez, they're not representing  
13 us; and we came down to Harrisburg and walked the halls  
14 and met you.

15 And there was legislators that said, My  
16 goodness, in all my years down here, I've never had a  
17 corrections officer in my office; and they asked  
18 questions, good questions. And I hope good came of it.

19 In this meeting today, I wish it was held  
20 inside the institution with the staff. They're in there  
21 working in an environment where they feel free to speak,  
22 and that's why I'm here today. I have nothing to lose,  
23 nothing to gain; and that's why I'm here.

24 When I speak of the riots of 1989, they're  
25 after -- like I said, the commissioner was let go. And

1 they went after more money for staffing, and that  
2 staffing was at the top levels, upper management.  
3 Central office has grown. I don't know how many  
4 followed. They started union management. The feds had  
5 unit management where a civilian would be in charge of  
6 the housing unit at a high salary. We never let go of  
7 the other managers.

8           Prior to that, you had a lieutenant in  
9 charge of the housing unit and a sergeant; and they made  
10 the call. If the inmate didn't like the decision, he  
11 didn't have anybody else to run to. Today, there's too  
12 many upper management people to run to. If you don't  
13 like your answer, go to somebody else; and the officers  
14 are undermined in doing that.

15           As a corrections officer, I'd like to think  
16 that I was paid a good salary and I wanted to do my job.  
17 And the officers that are there today I'm sure feel the  
18 same way, but they're being undermined. Allow them to  
19 do the job they're doing. Enforce the rules.

20           That was some of the notes I had from the  
21 retired manager. He was saying, you're right, Ron; it's  
22 management, you know; it's management. You need to go  
23 back to the hiring of people with experience and people  
24 with a sense of direction.

25           At one time, the Department of Corrections

1 of Pennsylvania led the nation. People came from all  
2 around the world to see Old Eastern Penn and how we were  
3 doing things. And, again, we should be leading the  
4 nation again. Let's come up with some ideals.

5           Representative Benninghoff, you mentioned  
6 inmate labor and the idleness. I have notes here that  
7 touch on that. Correctional industries: In the early  
8 50's, there was riots at Pittsburgh. And then those  
9 inmates were brought to Rockview, and they rioted, also.  
10 And there was so much labor there, they brought in the  
11 State Police and volunteer fireman to take care of the  
12 animals.

13           People say, well, prisoners are  
14 self-sufficient. There was that much labor. Rockview  
15 ground was taken from people by eminent domain for one  
16 reason and one reason only, to make labor for the  
17 inmates so they have a sense of being, to get them out  
18 of their cells.

19           I sat here in the back of the room, I  
20 started -- my back started getting cramped up; I can't  
21 even handle sitting still. And I can't imagine being in  
22 a cell all day. And if you put me in a cell with other  
23 inmates and you have officers who aren't allowed to do  
24 their job and enforce the rules, then inmates want to  
25 take over; and that's where the gangs come in.

1           You know, people don't even understand, in  
2 today's society, these young men walking around with  
3 their pants hanging low, that started in the prison  
4 system. Prison has started to influence society, and it  
5 should be the other way around where we're influencing  
6 society in a good way, when people are released with a  
7 trade, manners.

8           Not everybody that's incarcerated is  
9 animal-like. Our prison system today has gotten to the  
10 point where we just fill a bed with an inmate. Go back  
11 to the maximum, medium, or minimum security where you  
12 earn everything you get. You come out of what's called  
13 a restricted housing unit, it's a jail inside of a jail.  
14 You go back to earning all your benefits: TV. Inmates  
15 have TV; they pay for it. You know, it gives them  
16 something to do. They have nothing to do

17           We've taken away a lot of the jobs. We've  
18 taken away the carrot on a string. This sounds crazy,  
19 but when I started in the Department of Corrections,  
20 they had this thing called lifer's hoagies. The inmates  
21 organizations could buy these hoagies off of nonprofit  
22 organizations: Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, sometimes it  
23 was stores; and they sold them inside the jail.

24           Staff really wasn't involved, maybe the  
25 activities personnel were involved. I know they were



1 involved. But the inmates had to be six months  
2 misconduct free to get a hoagie. At the time, I was a  
3 young officer; I thought this is crazy. Why are we  
4 letting these guys have hoagies? I didn't understand.  
5 Once they did away with them, you did away with a carrot  
6 on a string. They had to be six months misconduct free  
7 to be able to order these hoagies.

8           And am I here today saying we need to do  
9 that? No, we need to allow management to manage the  
10 prisons. And we need to hire good management and  
11 acknowledge good management and promote good management  
12 and not promote family or through the good ole boy or  
13 girl network.

14           Sounds crazy. They get their hoagies.  
15 They'd stay in their cell to protect their hoagies and  
16 weren't -- didn't go to the dining hall, didn't go to  
17 the yard. And I look back and I think, wow, it was a  
18 tool. Inmate Jones who used the manners, yes, sir, no,  
19 sir, he knew that, hey, I got to toe the line if I want  
20 to get my hoagie.

21           He got furloughs. Furloughs got carried  
22 away, just like the hoagies got carried away. They got  
23 to the point where they started letting them order too  
24 much stuff. And the answer to that was just to do away  
25 with it altogether; they worried about contraband.

1           Like I said, I'm not saying we need to bring  
2 hoagies; I'm just saying the carrot on a string. When I  
3 helped start PSCOA, one of the things PSCOA did, the  
4 association, not the union, one of the things we wanted  
5 to implement was, have implemented, there was a bill  
6 that was tried to put out a couple times called good  
7 time, where inmates were getting time off their sentence  
8 for good behavior.

9           I'm sorry to say, that is politically  
10 incorrect. It should be hard time. It should be a bill  
11 that you guys and ladies can pass and you would look  
12 like you're tough on crime, which you would be. Inmates  
13 have to give hard labor, behave, go to their programs,  
14 and give them time off their sentence.

15           For every year you get an inmate out of  
16 prison, I don't have the factual numbers here, 36,  
17 \$38,000 a year is what it costs to incarcerate. And in  
18 doing as much, the other inmates see, hey, if I behave,  
19 I get this; if I work hard, I get this. The carrot on a  
20 string. We don't have that anymore.

21           The sexual assaults that happen, in the  
22 early 90's, there was an inmate that pulled a nurse into  
23 a cell at SCI Rockview, whether you know this or not, it  
24 wasn't staff that came to her rescue. You can't have  
25 enough staff everywhere, every place. It was inmates

1 that saw it happen, and inmates pulled that nurse and  
2 rescued her out of that cell; and they commenced to give  
3 that inmate some justice. And those inmates were  
4 rewarded, you know, for saving this female staff nurse.

5 I'm not so sure today that the inmates would  
6 do that, for the simple fact that we're not  
7 acknowledging good behavior; we're not acknowledging  
8 those that are following the rules. We've put lifers in  
9 housing units to help subdue the tension of the younger  
10 inmates.

11 Let me take a peek at my notes. Utilizing  
12 staff: There's a time to utilize staff better and allow  
13 management to do it. You know, we have K9 units with  
14 dogs out in the parking lot going through cars. I'm not  
15 so sure that's a great idea, you know, that alone. I'd  
16 rather use dogs for movement of animal-like inmates.  
17 And, yes, we have inmates that are animal-like.

18 We have inmates that are just like you and  
19 me, they're people; and their family wants them to be  
20 taken care of. And that's what I said earlier, I  
21 represent the inmates, too. They need a voice. You  
22 know, corrections officers that were here speaking  
23 earlier are union officials. They don't work inside the  
24 institution. They don't wear the uniform and go inside  
25 and work. They hold a position there that's holding up

1 staffing. They're not going to like that I said that,  
2 but it's a bottom-line fact: Utilizing staff better:

3 Night shift: Prior to 1989, we had one  
4 lieutenant, one sergeant and the officers, and then we  
5 had inmates out working. We had inmates out working at  
6 the sewage plant all night long, the boiler house, state  
7 garage keeping the boilers going in the winter; and it  
8 worked.

9 We had one fence. It worked. Why did it  
10 work? We had good staff. It worked. Why did it work?  
11 We had good staff. I hope to go back to that point on  
12 the good staff.

13 After the Camp Hill riots, like I said, the  
14 commissioner was released. The next commissioner came  
15 in. He came down there and he asked the legislature for  
16 more money for staffing. They had a hearing at SCI  
17 Huntingdon, and I'll never forget this, the power went  
18 out, the lights went out, the cameras; and he used that  
19 to say, hey, look even the infrastructure, we need more  
20 money, more money, more money, more money; and the money  
21 was used for more staffing at the upper level.

22 They created the unit management positions.  
23 Some of the jails now have two majors, security  
24 captains, all these different -- where you could be  
25 hiring more line staff; they're enforcing the rules.

1           There's been an erosion of the enforcement  
2 of the smallest rules because we don't want to upset the  
3 inmates. And if I'm babbling, please, somebody cut me  
4 off.

5           I mentioned the pepper spray. The union  
6 here earlier put on the board there the housing unit  
7 with the inmates in the warehouse. I'm wondering, is  
8 the staff that work there, are they forced to work there  
9 or do they ask to work there?

10           And to give you an example of that, I said  
11 earlier you have to allow management to manage. And  
12 when they do it wrong, they need to be pointed out and  
13 called out on it.

14           Restricted housing unit inmates are your  
15 maximum security inmates. We don't have, per se,  
16 maximum security prisons anymore. Every prison should  
17 have its own identity, its own theme. SCI Rockview at  
18 one time was Rockview Farm. You come to Rockview,  
19 you're going to work.

20           They had an RHU that was down in the  
21 basement. It was a hard RHU. They actually had a pot  
22 for them to use for the restroom that they put in the  
23 cell. They got a canon ball; it was bread dough that  
24 was rolled up with shredded carrots and water.

25           But the inmates that went to the RHU back

1 then didn't stay very long, because if they stayed very  
2 long they were crazy to handle that. And what most of  
3 them went down there for, and I was told this by the  
4 older time officers, most of them went down there for  
5 refusing to work. Because the attitude was -- and they  
6 had to roll their mattress up in the daytime and set it  
7 outside their cell -- the attitude was, we're not going  
8 to let you lay around and do nothing while the other  
9 inmates are out working.

10           It worked. There's things that worked that  
11 we need to look back on and change. I said about the  
12 RHU inmates, it requires more staff. More higher level  
13 security requires more staff, and as such, you have two  
14 officers and one inmate. A lot of these inmates that  
15 are in the RHU, I'm not going to say all, a lot of them  
16 are very assaultive.

17           By design, some of the new institutions,  
18 they feel they have amnesty; they almost feel like that  
19 have to act and get along with the rest of the inmates  
20 in the RHU. Crazy, you know. Just bottom line crazy,  
21 some of the stuff that goes on.

22           They pointed out the picture on the wall  
23 there, the dormitory. I'll give you an example. SCI  
24 Rockview has a forestry camp, and it works; and I hope  
25 in no way shape or form do you look at it and want to do

1 away with it. It works. You had one officer, and I  
2 don't know what the numbers are today; when I worked up  
3 there you had -- and I worked just about every job in  
4 the jail and every shift. You had one officer and 70  
5 inmates. And I pointed out earlier about the inmates  
6 pulling the inmate out of the cell helping, actually,  
7 the police.

8 I'm sorry if I stepped on somebody's toes by  
9 mentioning the forestry camp. Years ago, Dr. Mascavage  
10 (phonetic), when I helped start PSCOA, he said, what do  
11 you want out of this? Do you want to be a  
12 superintendent? I said, what I want I can't tell you  
13 because I'm afraid you'll do away with it; and that was  
14 to work at the forestry camp.

15 And that was the one time in my career I  
16 felt really good about it. I was taking inmates out  
17 into the woods and working. I had inmates that never  
18 worked before, and I can remember them saying, Officer  
19 Bowman, you're working us like a slave. I said, no, I'm  
20 affording you the opportunity to do something. I said,  
21 if you work hard, don't do it for me, do it for  
22 yourself. Don't do it for the Department of  
23 Corrections, do it for yourself.

24 At the end of the week, the weekends you're  
25 going appreciate and you're to sleep good at night. And

1 when I left up there, there was inmates that came to me  
2 and said, Officer Bowman, nobody talked to me the way  
3 you did. I want to thank you. There was inmates that  
4 wanted to hug me. I said, no, that's my job, you know;  
5 and that's actually the job of the staff inside the  
6 prison, is to set a good example and help direct, keep  
7 it safe, and give them opportunities.

8           That forestry camp, you had one officer and  
9 as many as, when I was up there maybe 70 inmates; and  
10 that was at night, weekends, holidays, evenings. They  
11 weren't asking for more staffing. It worked fine. Did  
12 they have fights? Did they have problems? Sure, they  
13 did. Did the inmates help police it? Yes, sir, they  
14 did. They didn't want to see it go away. They were  
15 afforded an opportunity and they wanted to preserve it.

16           I'd like to think that the majority of those  
17 inmates got out of jail and stayed out. I don't have  
18 those numbers. When I spoke about utilizing staff after  
19 the Camp Hill riots, we came up with a SERT team, HR  
20 team, Chris team (phonetic). That requires more staff,  
21 more overtime to keep these teams.

22           I always said all uniformed staff should be  
23 trained on these things, and if you have a disturbance  
24 you put it out as quickly as possible. You don't call  
25 in staff as far as an hour away and gear them up.



1           At SCI Huntingdon that's what they did when  
2 they had a riot. Somebody can correct me otherwise.  
3 The deputy went in with a shot gun and laid down a  
4 couple of shots and sent the officers down range; told  
5 the inmates to get down. Put it to an end quick before  
6 it spread any farther.

7           Bottom line, years ago or a while back here,  
8 we did a hiring freeze, not just the officers, all  
9 staff. Management, we froze their pay. We did things  
10 like when they got overtime they had to take comp time,  
11 they got no pay. They had no union representation.  
12 They couldn't buck the system.

13           So why would somebody promote into  
14 management the lower ranks of management? Why would you  
15 give up your bid job? And we have these bid jobs  
16 because of the union, and I believe in them. I'm not  
17 saying that management should -- if they can utilize  
18 staff, shouldn't utilize them; but, you know, you've  
19 built time in, you should be able to work your way into  
20 something.

21           But there was staff that didn't want good  
22 staff, that didn't want to promote because of the  
23 conditions. There was no gain for them financially. It  
24 was a headache. I promote, they throw me on another  
25 shift. I promote, I don't get overtime. They mandate

1 me to come in and work and I get nothing, you know, I  
2 get comp time for it. If I wanted comp time, you know,  
3 I'd use my vacation. I said earlier every prison should  
4 have its own agenda. The superintendent should, they're  
5 paid a good salary, should be allowed to run those  
6 prisons.

7 I want to back up here. I said earlier  
8 about Dr. Mascavage. Even after he retired when we  
9 started PSCOA, the association, he had called me at home  
10 about a couple of things. I wanted peace officer status  
11 for corrections officers, you know, go to the same  
12 training in law enforcement.

13 Officers do carry firearms outside the  
14 institution, and years ago they carried a firearm, in  
15 the early years at SCI Rockview and Pittsburgh, they  
16 carried their firearm inside their shirt, where the  
17 inmates didn't even know they had a firearm, but they  
18 had a firearm.

19 Whether anybody knows that or not, they had  
20 38 shorts, six round cylinders, five rounds, empty  
21 chamber on the hammer; and that's actually how the riots  
22 started at Rockview. They surrounded an officer they  
23 thought was weak and said, give up your gun. There's 50  
24 of us, and you've got five rounds; and he gave up his  
25 gun. So we don't have firearms inside the institutions

1 anymore. Officers are armed with a whistle.

2           That's why I'm asking for the pepper spray.  
3 At least if I'm down range getting the snot kicked out  
4 of me -- my days of this are over. I don't have those  
5 nightmares anymore. Like I said, I didn't want to  
6 testify; but I have officers that are retired that still  
7 have those nightmares. And corrections officers do have  
8 those nightmares. I shouldn't say all of them do. I  
9 know I did. I wake up in the middle of the night, punch  
10 my wife or something, because I'm thinking about work,  
11 trying to get away from a situation. And she says, my  
12 goodness, what are you doing? I said, sorry, honey; I'm  
13 thinking about work. Them days are over, and I didn't  
14 come here today to start them again.

15           I spoke about inmates earning everything  
16 they get. Dr. Mascavage and I would speak, and he  
17 wouldn't want to rock the boat because he wanted his son  
18 to one day move up in the upper ranks of management. I  
19 believe he has since then. Mascavage had some great  
20 ideals.

21           And there was things -- again, I spoke about  
22 these hoagies -- that I didn't understand. One of them  
23 was, he was the only superintendent that would do this.  
24 And the superintendents back then had this latitude, I  
25 guess I should say, to be able to manage and do what

1 they wanted to do. He'd take, I don't remember if the  
2 number's, like 20 inmates, put them on a bus, two  
3 corrections officers and a lieutenant armed. The  
4 inmates didn't know he was armed. And I don't remember  
5 if they had -- we did this all the time, and would be  
6 armed, and they'd take them out to churches and these  
7 inmates would sing.

8 Now these inmates were determined by  
9 management, counselors and psychiatrists that they'd be  
10 safe to take out. It was an educated risk is what I'm  
11 trying to say. We never ever once had an inmate escape  
12 or do anything to shine a bad light on the program.

13 And Mascavage said to me on the phone after  
14 he retired, he said, do you know why I did that, Officer  
15 Bowman? I said, no, sir. He said, because I had good  
16 staff. And I said, well, Superintendent, you never  
17 relayed that to us. I always thought it was crazy to do  
18 this.

19 You know, part of the problem is  
20 communications within the Department of Corrections up  
21 and down the line. We spoke of one of the areas of  
22 overtime that I made a little note on. You have a lot  
23 of staff that are in the National Guard and Reserves,  
24 and there's going to be staff that aren't happy about  
25 this; but actually if you join the National Guard and

1 Reserves while you're a corrections officer, it gives  
2 you an escape. One weekend a month you can go to  
3 something you might enjoy versus staying in a housing  
4 unit of 200, 300 inmates. And in doing so, while they  
5 go to their Reserves, you have to hire overtime. I'm  
6 saying maybe there should be cap on their percent and  
7 number of staff that are in the Reserves and the  
8 National Guard.

9 In no way, shape or form am I taking  
10 anything away from the Military men and women; I'm just  
11 saying that if it's costing, not just the taxpayers but  
12 the other officers and the safety security institutions,  
13 it should be capped, what percent.

14 The union spoke of training, you know. Hey,  
15 if you need to train everybody, lock the jail down, give  
16 them a day of training. Inmates don't have to get out  
17 and exercise. When I spoke of the hard time bill, in a  
18 way you're giving something, giving them opportunities,  
19 giving them a carrot on a string. There's also time to  
20 take things away.

21 You have inmates going to the RHU that will  
22 actually stay out there their whole time. They don't  
23 care if it costs more staffing. They don't want to be  
24 in the population because of the gangs and the  
25 insecurity. They have security in that cell. They have

1 no TV; they get, I believe it's one hour of exercise a  
2 day; shower three times a week; but they feel secure in  
3 there. And another area to make it a little more of a  
4 deterrent, I always thought, why not shower and exercise  
5 them at night. Men and women get up and go to work all  
6 hours of the night. Why can't these inmates? When the  
7 rest of the jail is locked down these inmates that are  
8 nonbehaviors, why not let them shower and exercise at  
9 night when the rest of the jail is locked down? That's  
10 utilizing staff. That's for a management person to make  
11 that decision, but that's new thinking, that's what the  
12 Department needs, a new sense of direction.

13           From the top down, there's a time for change  
14 and a new sense of direction. We feed inmates, or at  
15 least when I was there, they fed inmates that went out  
16 in the field and worked, bagged lunches. You know, that  
17 got old for them. Same with the RHU, give them a bagged  
18 lunch in the morning and they're you're cutting down  
19 staffing. And if they don't like it, too bad.

20           I spoke of corrections industries. Again,  
21 more money, more staffing. The staffing there went to  
22 the very top; it's top heavy. Today they look at ways  
23 to make money in corrections industries. Corrections  
24 industries was started to bring labor, to have labor for  
25 the inmates. Not to make money in no way, shape or

1 form; it was to create labor.

2           When I started at SCI Rockview, you had as  
3 many as 40 inmates going out with one labor foreman out  
4 in the field to pick crops or pick rocks; and they had  
5 nothing more than a whistle and a radio. It worked.

6           I spoke of the erosion of the enforcement of  
7 rules. I spoke of the officers not feeling like  
8 somebody has their back. You know, you give them a  
9 uniform, you give them a job. And when they do their  
10 job, there's officers that felt, management that felt  
11 they were picking on the inmates.

12           I know today at SCI Rockview, I notice from  
13 other staff I've talked to, the superintendent they have  
14 right now, officers feel that he has their back. I  
15 can't speak for the other institutions. I've never  
16 worked a prototypical, as far as the staffing.

17           You have to have somebody walking around to  
18 make sure the inmates are abiding by the rules. And  
19 when you have that erosion, when you're not enforcing  
20 the little rules, it just trickles and you lose control.  
21 And who's the enforcement? Other inmates, gangs.

22           Again, I say carrot on a string; afford them  
23 opportunities for change is what they need. That's  
24 pretty much it. If I can take some questions, I'd be  
25 more than happy to. And, again, I apologize if I

1 rambled. I didn't get a lot of sleep.

2 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: Well, sorry to  
3 cause you no sleep.

4 MR. BOWMAN: That's all right.

5 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: I just want to  
6 say thanks for sharing your experience with us. It's  
7 very valuable to our Committee, and taking your time to  
8 be here, as well.

9 But any questions? Representative  
10 Benninghoff, did you have -- Representative Regan?

11 REPRESENTATIVE REGAN: Thank you, Mr.  
12 Chairman, and thank you very much for your testimony.  
13 It was very informative.

14 MR. BOWMAN: Yes, sir.

15 REPRESENTATIVE REGAN: When did you retire,  
16 sir?

17 MR. BOWMAN: I retired, I believe it was  
18 last -- I don't even think about the past.

19 REPRESENTATIVE REGAN: But recently?

20 MR. BOWMAN: And I won't even say I retired.  
21 I career changed. I had enough. It was time to get  
22 out. Last July.

23 REPRESENTATIVE REGAN: Last July?

24 MR. BOWMAN: Yes, sir.

25 REPRESENTATIVE REGAN: Now, did you notice,



1 let's say over the last, I don't know, 20 years or so,  
2 that there's been like a rapid decline in, I don't know,  
3 like values and empathy, among the criminal element a  
4 lack of morals, values? I noticed it when I was in law  
5 enforcement in the 90's that things really started going  
6 south, where the bad guys all of a sudden were becoming  
7 more and more dangerous.

8 Can you agree with that statement?

9 MR. BOWMAN: I hear a lot of staff saying  
10 the inmates have changed, the mentality has changed.  
11 Well, society is changing. You know, you look at the  
12 problems we're having out in Ferguson, you know, society  
13 is changing and accordingly our prisons need to change  
14 along with that.

15 I can remember when inmates would come up  
16 from Philadelphia area and they'd come in and they had  
17 hard time grasping the fact that we're in charge; you  
18 know, we're in uniform, we enforce the rules. They'd  
19 say, this is so petty; but that's our job.

20 But I want to tell you something, inmates  
21 appreciate when officers do their jobs. When you're  
22 60-some years old, your doing life or whatever, who  
23 knows, and you're incarcerated and you're standing in  
24 line to get your meal and some young thug and his  
25 friends step in front of you and an officer steps in and

1 makes them go to the back of the line, they appreciate  
2 that. They'll come to you later and say thank you for  
3 doing your job, you know.

4 REPRESENTATIVE REGAN: But do you feel that  
5 the officers today, as opposed to when you started your  
6 work in the 80s, are in more danger than you were back  
7 then?

8 MR. BOWMAN: Yes, sir. I definitely feel as  
9 such, and it's due to some of the policies that -- and I  
10 really feel sorry for people that are -- there's nothing  
11 worse than being hired to do a job and not allowed to do  
12 it, to include those officers but also some of your  
13 management staff.

14 You know, like I said, every institution  
15 should have its own identity and its own vision.

16 REPRESENTATIVE REGAN: So being short  
17 staffed back then was different than being short staffed  
18 now? I guess you would agree?

19 MR. BOWMAN: When I started, there was a  
20 group of us that started together. You had Piper  
21 employees that were laid off; they were older gentlemen  
22 and stuff. I don't think that much has changed, other  
23 than the way the institutions are run with the short  
24 staffing.

25 REPRESENTATIVE REGAN: Uh-huh. So it's your

1 feeling that from top to bottom, the institutions are  
2 management top heavy?

3 MR. BOWMAN: Yes, sir. I think that money  
4 could be better utilized, and that's where your hiring  
5 for more uniformed staff, line staff, comes in.

6 REPRESENTATIVE REGAN: Okay.

7 MR. BOWMAN: You know, it don't have to be  
8 at the taxpayers expense. There's a way of utilizing  
9 that staff better. And that's every -- like I said,  
10 every institution should have its own vision, it's own  
11 -- there's some institutions that might need that  
12 top-heavy staffing to an extent, you know.

13 I mean, I can remember the years prior to  
14 unit management, like I said, when the lieutenant ran  
15 the block. It worked fine, you know. Today that's just  
16 another person. If that inmate don't like the answer  
17 you gave him, he can go, too. I told you, no, but  
18 mister so-and-so told you you could. Well, why try to  
19 do my job if I'm going to be undermined? And that's  
20 part of what happens.

21 REPRESENTATIVE REGAN: Okay. Thank you so  
22 much for your testimony, Mr. Bowman.

23 MR. BOWMAN: I'm sorry if I wasn't able  
24 to --

25 REPRESENTATIVE REGAN: No, no; that's good.

1 That's good. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate it.

2 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: Representative  
3 Benninghoff?

4 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: Thank you, Mr.  
5 Chairman. I have two quick questions. I'll try to be  
6 precise, and it's kind of coat-tailing on what  
7 Representative Regan was speaking of.

8 In your testimony you talked about it got to  
9 the point where enough was enough, and I know lots of  
10 corrections officers and they'll say the same. I'm  
11 curious if your frustration of policies not being  
12 implemented or arbitrarily applied one occasion versus  
13 another or one inmate being given more grace than  
14 another, is that what eventually drives people to get  
15 out of there, because they just feel they aren't able to  
16 do their job?

17 MR. BOWMAN: Well, bottom line is, all your  
18 prisons, it's a negative environment, bottom line.

19 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: From the  
20 get-go, correct?

21 MR. BOWMAN: From the get-go. And you know  
22 going into it; it's a prison.

23 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: Right.

24 MR. BOWMAN: There's staff that come in and  
25 start orientation and they're gone. They've realized,

1 no, this isn't for me.

2 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: Right.

3 MR. BOWMAN: And bless their heart for  
4 acknowledging it then instead of waiting until later  
5 when they're in the system and they're just there.

6 And I apologize; I'm sleep deprived here.  
7 At the end, like I said, even the mandates play the part  
8 of making that decision, enough's enough.

9 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: Mandates by us  
10 or by the institution?

11 MR. BOWMAN: The mandates of overtime, you  
12 know, being mandated. It's like, enough. If I wanted  
13 the overtime, I'd go in and volunteer. I mean, force me  
14 to come in and work in a nasty environment, you know,  
15 you're throwing me in a housing unit because you need a  
16 number, you know. Let us do our job. Take the prisons  
17 back. Let the officers do their jobs and enforce the  
18 rules. That carrot on a string, afford opportunities.

19 That's what I'm saying to you, this vision  
20 is from the top down for change. It's not just staffing  
21 alone for line staff. It needs to come from the top  
22 down.

23 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: Last question.  
24 I've heard from others that corrections is not really  
25 about changing behaviors or being punitive for poor

1 choices, but it's more going towards this treatment  
2 philosophy. What has that done in your observation over  
3 a 27-year career span, or am I not --

4 MR. BOWMAN: Sure. Yes, sir. I believe  
5 that at times, these programs have stepped over the  
6 bounds of security when it comes to treatment. Yes,  
7 they need treatment. Drug addicts, it's an addiction;  
8 it's an illness. You can incarcerate all you want, but  
9 it's -- I'm not going to even go there on my feelings  
10 about the drug problems.

11 If we put half as much money into drug  
12 treatment centers as we do in prisons, I think society  
13 would be a lot better off. I had a point I wanted to  
14 make, and it slipped my tongue already, when you spoke  
15 here. I apologize.

16 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: And that was on  
17 the path of trying to decide whether we're just  
18 correcting behavior, or is the new philosophical belief  
19 -- and I think there has been a trend difference, not  
20 just here, but nationwide about more treatment  
21 orientation versus -- and in return, staff tells me  
22 that's now empowering the inmates.

23 MR. BOWMAN: I really don't have that answer  
24 to that extent that maybe you're looking for.

25 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: Okay.

1 MR. BOWMAN: Security needs to come first  
2 and foremost. Okay? We need to afford them the  
3 opportunity for change, and that's where that treatment  
4 comes in.

5 Just to kind of clear things up a little  
6 bit, this incident that happened at SCI Rockview was a  
7 sexual assault of this inmate. The union addressed --  
8 inmates classification has changed a little bit. I  
9 apologize. I just had to clear this up. I'm not  
10 management. I don't work there anymore. I don't know  
11 if it's happening or not, but we've got to fill a bed;  
12 let's change this when staffing. Let's afford this  
13 inmate -- this comes under your question under  
14 treatment.

15 Even though we know he's a sexual offender,  
16 sexual predator, animal-like, I spoke of carrot on a  
17 string for hard labor and different things. But there's  
18 a time with treatment, which we weren't impressed that  
19 we were succeeding; so we got Mr. -- I'll throw a  
20 fictitious name out, Mr. Jones -- if you behave, we'll  
21 put you in this housing unit.

22 Mr. Jones, if you behave, we're going to  
23 give you this job. Then they can sit back and say, look  
24 how well I've done with Mr. Jones. Nobody else was able  
25 to succeed. And that comes in -- I know there's still

1 lawsuits and stuff for this poor young lady, but that  
2 comes under hearings and looking into the inmates  
3 records and files and other staff that might have wrote  
4 letters stating, you know, they felt threatened by this  
5 individual.

6 And that comes under your question there  
7 within treatment. Security, security, security has to  
8 be number one, first and foremost. If we're  
9 jeopardizing security for treatment, then there's a  
10 problem.

11 You know, it's like the armed officers on  
12 horses out there watching the inmates, if there's that  
13 much of a security risk, just don't take them out there.

14 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: Good point.

15 MR. BOWMAN: To me, that's common sense.  
16 But I apologize, I'm --

17 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: No, I  
18 appreciate your candor. We appreciate your response.  
19 Mr. Chairman, thank you.

20 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: Representative  
21 Barbin.

22 REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: Thank you. When I  
23 first got elected, I went over to Camp Hill and they had  
24 a program when you walk through the Camp Hill Prison,  
25 they have -- that's where they classify all the



1 prisoners. And what they told me at the time was that  
2 ten percent of the prisoners would never get out. They  
3 also told me at the time that the -- that it was for the  
4 safety of the facility that violent prisoners were  
5 matched up in cells with nonviolent prisoners.

6           You retired a couple of months ago. Are  
7 those still the policies of the Department of  
8 Corrections?

9           MR. BOWMAN: It's been over a year ago since  
10 I retired, and things have changed, I'm sure, since I  
11 retired. An example of that is, the inmates -- I can  
12 remember at SCI Rockview, the inmates wanted a housing  
13 unit for inmates that were behaving, long-term inmates,  
14 lifers. They're never going home; they're in jail the  
15 rest of their natural life. And you can be incarcerated  
16 in Pennsylvania for the rest of your natural life  
17 without killing somebody. You can be an accomplice to a  
18 murder.

19           And I believe in -- I can't even think of  
20 the name of it now -- releasing them. It worked. In  
21 worked in the 50s. I can remember going through past  
22 caseloads, you know, looking at these guys. They never  
23 came back to jail. People do learn from their mistakes.  
24 And some of the crimes they committed, I was like, oh,  
25 my goodness, and they released this guy.

1           To take these -- and these inmates at  
2 Rockview wanted a housing unit just for them. There's a  
3 good example. You give me a housing unit full of lifers  
4 who've been around forever, it's their life; they know  
5 it's their life. It's their jail. It's their dining  
6 hall. They care about it. And in a weird, crazy way,  
7 it's their's. It's the only home they know. They know  
8 they're not going home.

9           Christmas tree -- I can remember they used  
10 to put a Christmas tree in a housing unit. I'd think,  
11 oh, my goodness; you've got to be kidding me. But to  
12 those lifers it meant something, simple thing as a  
13 Christmas tree. It reminded them of home. They're  
14 never going to go home.

15           But they didn't want to give them their -- I  
16 forget what they called it back then -- they wanted a  
17 housing unit just for them. There again, you could  
18 probably run it with one or two staff and not have --  
19 you're always going to have problems. You have problems  
20 in society with fighting and stuff.

21           What we're talking about is staffing. You  
22 could run it with less staffing. It's known that you  
23 need more staffing and more security, maximum security  
24 versus minimum security. And, yes, they do put lifers  
25 in a cell. They take a young kid who's a problem addict

1 and put him in a cell. That's not that inmate's job to  
2 correct that individual; that's our job. You know, I  
3 mean, there's nobody on --

4 REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: My question is a  
5 little different. What I'm trying to get at is, if you  
6 have a violent criminal in with a nonviolent criminal  
7 who happens to have a two-year term, does that either  
8 make it better or worse for the facility itself?  
9 Because we're understaffed at this point.

10 MR. BOWMAN: Sure. Yes, sir. I believe  
11 within your question, you're putting a violent inmate, a  
12 known violent inmate -- and I've been to federal court  
13 before where an inmate was suing over being put in a  
14 cell, and he was a violent inmate with another violent  
15 inmate that violated him; and he was suing over it.

16 You have inmates that tell you, and they  
17 are, too, that if you put them in my cell, you know,  
18 something's going to happen. They're letting you know;  
19 they don't want to be doubled up.

20 To answer your question, that's not a good  
21 policy, you know, to put violent inmates --

22 REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: That's what I was  
23 getting at.

24 MR. BOWMAN: If it was your son or your  
25 daughter, you wouldn't want them in a cell with somebody

1 that's, nine times out of ten, you know they're going to  
2 be --

3 REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: What should we take  
4 away from this? I mean, the fact is, we know there's  
5 understaffing.

6 MR. BOWMAN: Yes, sir.

7 REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: Okay. We know that  
8 understaffing in certain historical contexts has created  
9 riots in our state system. What can we do right now?  
10 Is pepper spray an answer until the staffing is better?

11 MR. BOWMAN: Pepper spray is just a tool to  
12 be used. I said earlier, there's a time to look at  
13 management from the top down, there's a time to look to  
14 change the whole Department of Corrections, to have a  
15 sense of direction, to afford opportunities.

16 REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: We don't have a  
17 system that's like the federal system. The federal  
18 system has maximum five, maximum four, medium, medium,  
19 low security. Should we be moving to that system if  
20 we're not going to have any more staff?

21 MR. BOWMAN: My answer to that is, yes, sir.

22 REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: Okay.

23 MR. BOWMAN: When you take an inmate -- may  
24 I clear that up?

25 REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: Sure.

1 MR. BOWMAN: When you take an inmate -- and  
2 this has happened, just going back to the question about  
3 treatment. When you take an inmate that's a problematic  
4 inmate and known and you move him from one institution  
5 and give him a new identity to another institution and  
6 that staff don't know what they're getting --

7 REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: That was it.

8 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: Any more  
9 questions? Yeah, go ahead.

10 MR. DYMEK: If I may? Just, you know, based  
11 on your experience, we've talked about understaffing and  
12 the effect that can have on safety. I'm just curious  
13 about the other side where trainees are coming in. Is  
14 there a difference in terms of the impact on safety  
15 where there's a steady replacement of folks over time  
16 versus a large influx of trainees coming in at once to  
17 an institution?

18 MR. BOWMAN: Absolutely.

19 MR. DYMEK: Could you describe that?

20 MR. BOWMAN: Sure. You take a housing unit  
21 where on that housing unit you might have staff -- out  
22 of all the staff, the most senior one might have two  
23 years in the system. You have somebody who really don't  
24 know what's going on teaching somebody else coming into  
25 the system that -- that's the easiest example I can give

1 you.

2           And when you do this mass hiring, it's part  
3 of the problem; it's not part of the answer. And I  
4 don't have an idea to give you as far as how we, you  
5 know -- if we need to hire staff, you know, the trickle  
6 down, that's up to management to acknowledge that; and  
7 they should be held accountable to do it in a way that  
8 allows the training, the experience.

9           You know, some of your most senior officers  
10 are on nightshift. They're bid there by union. I had a  
11 good job at the end, but I was by myself. You don't  
12 want to be a part of it anymore. Management, you don't  
13 want to deal with management and you don't want to deal  
14 with the inmates, you know.

15           How do you entice that? I don't know.  
16 Through money? I don't know how you do it. How do you  
17 get change to get more senior staff to work the daylight  
18 and those things? How do you get good officers to  
19 promote, you know, other than pay or -- I remember years  
20 ago, like I said, I retired as a corrections officer.  
21 When I took the promotion test, I was going to promote.  
22 A captain back then said, Ron, why do you want to  
23 promote? I said, I'd like to think I can make some  
24 positive change. I wasn't thinking of the money. I  
25 thought I had some good ideals. And he said, the only

1 thing that's going to change is you. The system don't  
2 allow what you're thinking. And that's what I'm saying  
3 to you. I'm just giving you a couple of ideals that  
4 were given to me by other employees. There's a lot of  
5 staff that have some good ideals. There should be a  
6 committee to go out there and hear them, look at things.

7 I mean, this thing of inmate labor and this  
8 hardtime bill where you give time off for hard labor,  
9 that's a carrot on a string. Does it work? I gave you  
10 the example of the hoagies. That sounds silly, but it  
11 worked. I mean, misconduct free for six months, I can  
12 get a hoagie?

13 Geez, these guys would sell their mom for a  
14 sandwich. I'm telling you the truth. And you would,  
15 too, if you were in that setting. That's just how it  
16 is.

17 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: Any questions?  
18 Once again, thanks for being here. It was good that you  
19 were here.

20 MR. BOWMAN: Yes, sir. Thank you, and I  
21 apologize about being disorganized.

22 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: You did fine.  
23 Really well. So thank you, and appreciate your time  
24 again. Have a good day.

25 MR. BOWMAN: Sure. Yes, sir. Thank you.

1 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: Next testifiers  
2 are Tim Ringler, the Deputy Secretary of Administration,  
3 Department of Corrections; and Tabb Bickel, Deputy  
4 Secretary of Central Region. Welcome, and you can  
5 proceed when you wish.

6 MR. RINGLER: Good morning. Good morning,  
7 Chairman Marsico, and members of the Judiciary  
8 Committee. I'd like to thank you for asking for us to  
9 provide testimony this morning on staffing issues, which  
10 are really a critical issue in the Department right now.

11 My name is Tim Ringler. I'm the Deputy  
12 Secretary for Administration of the Department of  
13 Corrections. I've been with the Department for over 33  
14 years. I've worked in the financial area. I've managed  
15 the budget for almost all of those years in Corrections.

16 I became Deputy Secretary a little over four  
17 years ago. And as the Deputy Secretary, I still monitor  
18 the fiscal issues, as well as, HR issues. The  
19 correctional industries work programs, as we mentioned  
20 in here, as well as operations, of medical, food  
21 service, and other issues.

22 Okay. Also, at this time, I'd like for  
23 Deputy Secretary Bickel to introduce himself, as well.

24 MR. BICKEL: Thank you. My name's Tabb  
25 Bickel. I started in Corrections approximately 27 years



1 ago. I've worked at five institutions. I came through  
2 the ranks. I was a correctional officer one, sergeant,  
3 lieutenant, captain, major, deputy, superintendent, and  
4 now Deputy Secretary.

5 So I have -- the last 26 years of my life I  
6 have spent inside the walls and fences of the state  
7 correctional institutions. Recently, in June, I got  
8 promoted to the Deputy Secretary of the Central Region,  
9 where I oversee nine institutions, to include the  
10 motivational boot camp of Quehanna.

11 MR. RINGLER: Okay. I'd like to talk about  
12 -- in starting off the -- our complement situation in  
13 the Department of Corrections. We have a complement of  
14 15,822 staff, and we also have another group of 387  
15 positions that we could call a recruitment pool, which  
16 is kind of turnover. The institutions have these  
17 positions, but there was an assumption at the time that  
18 the pool was given that that amount would always be in a  
19 state of flux and so there wouldn't be any funding  
20 provided; but the positions actually exist for the  
21 facility.

22 At this point in time, of those numbers,  
23 which, including the recruitment pool, total 16,209, we  
24 have 1,593 vacancies in the system, which is about 9.8  
25 percent of that total workforce -- of the total

1 complement that we have.

2 On Page 6 of the document -- and I'm just  
3 pointing out in case you wanted to look at that --  
4 there's a breakdown of those vacancies by selected  
5 positions within the Department of Corrections.

6 The line CO complement, their numbers are  
7 8,731 positions with 598 vacancies or 6.8 percent of the  
8 positions. So if you look at the total numbers of 6.8  
9 percent of the vacancies are CO's and we have an overall  
10 9.8 percent, we have a lot of other vacancies in the  
11 Department, as well.

12 Those other positions are running at about a  
13 12-percent vacancy rate, and those positions are some  
14 things that were talked about in here, as well, such as  
15 people who run work programs, people in education, food  
16 service staff, administrative staff, even staff to go  
17 out and hire the corrections officers. We've got a lot  
18 of vacancies in that area, as well.

19 So why do we have that large of a vacancy  
20 rate? There are two reasons for that. And pretty much  
21 it starts around number one, which is money. The second  
22 is because of money then, we've changed some hiring  
23 procedures and we took a look at it because of the  
24 finances, but we've also, you know, found that these new  
25 procedures, you know, make a little more sense and

1 fiscally, so --

2           So one may ask if you take a look at our  
3 budgets in the Department of Corrections in the last  
4 couple years, that we've received significant increases  
5 in those budgets. So why are we still being pressured  
6 then with having to run these number of vacancies, which  
7 we don't enjoy running, I must add in here.

8           I certainly agree if, you know, you have  
9 positions because there's work for those positions to be  
10 done. So when you don't have them, you know, you're  
11 either filling on an overtime basis, which we mentioned  
12 before, or you're not filling them at all and certain  
13 things aren't going to get done, at least as well as if  
14 we had full complement.

15           The biggest driver that is really hitting  
16 our budget right now are the pensions in the State of  
17 Pennsylvania. In 2010, our contributions to the pension  
18 system from the Department of Corrections were 55  
19 million dollars; and they were assessed at a rate of 6.3  
20 percent of all salary wages over time and related costs.

21           We prepared our budget request to the  
22 Governor's Budget Office a few months ago, and we got  
23 the instructions in how we were to prepare that request.  
24 The rate for most employees in the Department of  
25 Corrections will have grown from that 6.3 percent to

1 almost 29 percent of salaries, overtime, etc.  
2 Dollarwise, the growth would be from 55 million, this is  
3 on an annual basis, to \$265 million a year. Over \$200  
4 million a year in five years is what the Corrections  
5 budget would need next year.

6           It's been growing at 40 to 50 million per  
7 year. It doesn't stop the next year unless of course  
8 there's a change in pension funding. And as my  
9 understanding is, there's one large year coming on top  
10 after next year as well, if we're going to continue on  
11 in the same way that we're doing now.

12           Another significant increase that's hit our  
13 budget during that same time frame is medical care.  
14 Medical care for active employees and medical care for  
15 retired employees, another area of significant growth.

16           For every filled position next year, the  
17 estimated cost for medical care that we assess for each  
18 one of those positions is \$22,000 per year. That number  
19 has grown -- or there's two parts to that number. The  
20 part with the retired employees is skyrocketing.

21           In that same five-year period that I  
22 mentioned the pensions went up, those retired costs have  
23 gone up 89 percent. The Department of Corrections  
24 budget at this point in time is about 80 percent  
25 personnel costs. It used to be less than that. Our

1 nonpersonnel costs, we've been working at various ways  
2 to reduce those costs and actually are spending less now  
3 than we were five years ago in nonpersonnel costs in the  
4 Department of Corrections. So this growth has really  
5 been in personnel costs.

6           So those are the factors, as well as salary  
7 increases, as well. And salary increases haven't been  
8 great for most of the Commonwealth employees. But  
9 again, all these increases impact on us, including the  
10 most recent interest arbitration award for the H1  
11 bargaining unit, which the corrections officers are a  
12 part of.

13           If I could read you a statement from what  
14 their union president put out to their staff on November  
15 7th, and I quote this: You are receiving wages far  
16 above other Commonwealth employees. Your medical  
17 insurance was our top priority. While everybody else is  
18 paying the five percent copay, we were able to hold the  
19 lines and you will still remain paying the three  
20 percent.

21           So again, for next year -- or for this year,  
22 which we're having trouble making ends meet this year,  
23 which is why we're holding such a large amount of  
24 vacancies. This cost is estimated, and it's not  
25 finalized yet; so this is fairly a rough guess, about

1 \$31 million increase that we weren't budgeted for. And  
2 for next year, the amount is about 51 million. Now,  
3 that's not additive; that's the amount for next year, so  
4 the increases for next year will be about 28 to get to  
5 51.

6 I'm just bringing that up to -- for people  
7 to realize what the cost of corrections is these days.  
8 And it's significant. And we, as managers of the  
9 Department of Corrections, you know, need to find ways.  
10 We can't keep going back every year for additional money  
11 for the taxpayers to come up with. We all know what  
12 financial situation the Commonwealth is in as a whole  
13 and for us to manage the piece that we're given and  
14 expect it to make that happen.

15 So now I want to talk alongside the change  
16 that we have in our hiring process. Our amount of  
17 overtime -- and there's a chart that is in the back of  
18 our presentation that shows the growth of overtime for  
19 each of the last five years -- there's actually two  
20 charts on Pages 9 and 10. What those charts -- there's  
21 two different ones, because one shows the amount of  
22 hours increase and one shows the cost.

23 And with increase in costs, the number of  
24 hours generate even a higher percentage of cost than the  
25 increase in number of hours. And it is true, those

1 overtime numbers are growing; they've grown  
2 significantly. It started out in 2011 with some growth  
3 in overtime, but really hit at the time that we were  
4 closing the two institutions back in 2012; and the  
5 reason was because we put a hiring freeze on our entire  
6 system so that people who would be losing their jobs  
7 within those institutions would have opportunities, you  
8 know, for employment at other facilities.

9           And actually, through that year, which we  
10 were trending a deficit that year through that hiring  
11 freeze, even though there was increased overtime, we  
12 managed to meet our budget.

13           Overtime for the short-term is a more  
14 cost-effective way to manage part of the budget for  
15 corrections officer staff, because it takes 38 weeks  
16 when you hire a new corrections officer for that  
17 individual to impact and actually pay for themselves  
18 because of the training period that they go through  
19 until they get to the point that they can actually work  
20 on overtime.

21           However, on the long-term way, that doesn't  
22 work out quite so much. And we've been pushed year to  
23 year through our annual budgets, you know, to try to  
24 make our ends meet on a year-to-year basis. Hiring a  
25 new person would save, over a two-year period, \$22,000 a

1 year. So in the longrun -- plus pension costs that were  
2 mentioned; that's another long-term issue that's not  
3 factored in those numbers.

4 So what we did this year, as was mentioned  
5 earlier, in late May we put on a hiring freeze. And the  
6 reason that we put that freeze on was back at that time,  
7 our budget for last year was \$55 million in the hole.  
8 We didn't get any indication yet at that point what type  
9 of supplemental appropriation that we may get to  
10 alleviate that and how much costs we might have to carry  
11 over into the next fiscal year.

12 The discussions were for a \$20 million  
13 supplemental, which means we would have been left \$35  
14 million short. The General Assembly and the Governor's  
15 Office did get us those additional monies, which we  
16 thank you for; that eliminated that deficit for the last  
17 fiscal year, which we didn't have to carry over and  
18 impact on where we were at.

19 That was known in July. And by late July,  
20 we took off the hiring freeze. And when I say, took off  
21 -- and talking about the hiring freeze itself, when you  
22 put on a freeze, what happens is, unless you tell people  
23 that are in the process that you've already promised  
24 jobs that know they can't have those jobs, more people  
25 are actually going to get hired during the beginning of



1 that freeze because you've made commitments and we were  
2 going to honor those commitments. So we actually hired  
3 90 additional staff during that time period that there  
4 was a freeze on.

5 We also approved 170 more positions of which  
6 over a hundred were corrections officers to begin  
7 filling, as well. Now, we made some changes to the  
8 hiring process; and that has slowed down the hiring  
9 through the first part of this fiscal year as  
10 institutions are adjusting to the new hiring practices.

11 One of the things that we did -- and  
12 training was mentioned a couple times in here and about  
13 having new officers, etc. -- is to provide better skills  
14 at the training academy for the cadets going through  
15 there before we send those cadets back into the  
16 institutions to begin work.

17 We've -- our numbers at the academy have  
18 fluctuated vastly in our classes up to like 250 people  
19 in a class, where people would more or less sit and  
20 watch PowerPoints and not really get the kind of  
21 hands-on training. It's not within an institution. We  
22 don't go that hands-on that we're actually putting  
23 them -- but we try to put them in some scenarios and  
24 show them how to handcuff and do other types of things  
25 while they're at the academy. So we limited the class

1 size to 120, so we can get that better training.

2 When we had the complement freeze on, we had  
3 at that time, stopped the process for getting medical  
4 and agility testing done for inmates. And that had a  
5 lagging effect on our hiring by at least a month,  
6 sometimes two months; and we're still going through the  
7 process in hiring staff to catch up with that.

8 But once we do, we should be back to a model  
9 where there's a consistent hiring through the Department  
10 where there's not large numbers of trainees then that  
11 will be going through an institution at one time; and we  
12 expect that to begin in January with the next training  
13 class that will be starting.

14 At this point in time, we've approved; so in  
15 the process the institutions are working to hire over  
16 260 corrections officers, so it was a delayed impact.  
17 That's not everyone. And we're still going to continue  
18 to look at our budget and see how we can manage to bring  
19 this within budget. We do understand that mandatory  
20 overtime is a big inconvenience.

21 I'm not sure it's quite the impact on safety  
22 that was mentioned here, but I will admit to some level  
23 that that's a possibility. Not only do we want to fill  
24 these positions, like we've said -- when we closed the  
25 two facilities and opened another one and we were

1 replacing positions, we had also thought of a program  
2 where we'd actually put a couple additional corrections  
3 officers in an institution because of the fact that  
4 there were -- there weren't as many jobs locally or  
5 within like a 50-mile radius of the closing institution.  
6 So we have some pilot programs to see if extra staffing  
7 would impact on that overtime.

8           We didn't get very far in that study because  
9 with the number of other vacancies we had, all this  
10 information would get dwarfed within there. We really  
11 wouldn't get any reliable data. We didn't pull those  
12 positions back from the institutions yet. They're still  
13 in their wage complements.

14           So, you know, once we get to a level again,  
15 it is our intent -- and I don't know when that could be  
16 started because I don't know what amount of budget we're  
17 going to get next year -- I will say this, in terms of  
18 what we need for our pension, medical, salary increases,  
19 filling more positions than we did this year, etc., our  
20 request is going to be over \$200 million, a 10-percent  
21 increase.

22           On the funding issue, not great news.  
23 Things like pension, medical and stuff, those are costs  
24 that are -- that's a hundred million just pension and  
25 the medical, and there's really not a lot that can be

1 done with those issues. So the personnel costs are  
2 really driving the system. We're trying to do and hold  
3 positions where we can within the facilities. Both  
4 Deputy Secretary Bickel and I sit on the committee where  
5 the institutions submit their requests, and some of  
6 those meetings can be very difficult, you know, in  
7 deciding which positions the institutions would get, you  
8 know, because as we try to stay within budget and fill  
9 as well.

10 I do want to say though, at this time, that  
11 although we are pushing a process that's basically  
12 creating more mandatory overtime, we are not asking the  
13 facilities to be short on correctional officer staffing.

14 We have not changed the number of posts in  
15 the institutions, except increased them slightly,  
16 especially with our mental-health issues that we've been  
17 dealing with recently.

18 So the number of posts have not declined.  
19 The management of those institutions are responsible to  
20 manage. And on numerous occasions, Secretary Wetzel has  
21 informed the superintendents that he does not want to go  
22 out to any institution and see that there are practices  
23 going on here with reduced security and safety because  
24 of budget issues.

25 If we were going to do that and make the

1 change, we could make our budget because we would just  
2 not fill those positions. That is not the case.  
3 There's always the case that, you know, people may think  
4 more staff are needed in certain areas; we have a  
5 process for that. We do staffing surveys of the  
6 facilities, institutional staff, union staff are a part  
7 of that process when we go through that.

8           Those recommendations come up, they go  
9 through the Regional Deputy Secretary, not only with  
10 Deputy Secretary Bickel, but the other two Regional  
11 Deputy Secretaries who all have a large background in  
12 security throughout their careers who take a look at  
13 these. They then go up through the Executive Deputy  
14 Secretary up through the Secretary.

15           So these aren't issues that are being hid  
16 out there. And the union also has, and they've done  
17 this in the past, if they felt there was an area that  
18 doesn't have enough security and there wasn't staff,  
19 that they've grieved this through the arbitration  
20 process, which is the collective bargaining process  
21 provides.

22           So I don't believe that we have this  
23 significant shortage out there. If we did, we just  
24 would not be running it this way to put people's lives  
25 in jeopardy, both the inmates, the staff, the visitors,

1 and everybody else that goes through the facility.

2 I attached, as part of this, the number of  
3 workmen's comp claims and the number of assaults to the  
4 back of my testimony here. And I don't have the numbers  
5 from July on because this is done on a fiscal year  
6 basis. We do have, however, trending so far this year  
7 on assaults; but I can't give you an average of what  
8 that's going to come out for the next couple months.

9 But the actual workmen's comp claims for  
10 line officers are actually down in that last year and  
11 not up. The number of assaults are running about the  
12 same. There's a few more major assaults. That's  
13 certainly troubling to us. And those assaults get, you  
14 know, deep reviews when those occur.

15 The assaults on inmates has changed a little  
16 bit. There's not a significant trend in that. But any  
17 assaults, you know, are taken seriously. And we'd like  
18 to eliminate all, if possible. In this kind of a job,  
19 it's not going to be possible; but what we can do to  
20 reduce those, you know, we'd certainly be looking at  
21 because, you know, in our business everything comes down  
22 to people, and almost every business does. I mean, you  
23 have bricks and mortars and everything else around the  
24 place, too; but it's your staff; it's the people you  
25 work with and everything. And we certainly wouldn't

1 want those individuals, you know, to be in harm's way if  
2 there's some practices that we're doing that's creating  
3 that issue.

4           One last thing that I'd like to say,  
5 training-wise, besides the change we made in basic  
6 training, we are pushing the institutions harder to do  
7 all of their training out at the facilities.

8           A couple years ago, the Auditor General did  
9 a report that basically said that at least our systems  
10 were not showing that we were completing all of that  
11 training. Part of that was an antiquated system we  
12 have. And with that system, we couldn't tell if there  
13 was some legitimacy to the rest of that statement.

14           Because, typically, when you look at that  
15 is, if it's not documented, it doesn't happen. We know  
16 some of it probably did happen, but it needs to be  
17 documented; and we've made a lot of changes. We changed  
18 the director at the training academy. We've had a lot  
19 more -- we're hiring all training coordinators. That's  
20 not a position that's allowed to be vacant. You know,  
21 once it comes, we're hiring that individual in there;  
22 and institutions have been told by the Secretary that  
23 you will, you know, provide the training. You're going  
24 to be watched. It's going to be done.

25           And I think in the last year that helped

1 drive the overtime to people who were not providing it  
2 that they are now doing it. Because training is  
3 important, and it certainly needs to be done.

4 That concludes the remarks that I have for  
5 today. And both Deputy Secretary Bickel and I welcome  
6 any questions that you may have.

7 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: Well, thank you  
8 very much. I have a number of questions. I know that  
9 Secretary Wetzel has been very active in his visits to  
10 the institutions since he's been secretary and keeps us  
11 informed, the Committee and the Chairs, of the  
12 activities and the ongoings and what's happening at the  
13 institutions.

14 Do you ever have a chance -- do you go out  
15 and visit the institutions, as well? Do you have a  
16 chance to do that?

17 MR. RINGLER: Yes. I visit the  
18 institutions -- every institution at least once a year.  
19 And I'll let Deputy Secretary Bickel mention how often  
20 he goes out.

21 MR. BICKEL: In my region, I visit every  
22 institution once a quarter; so that's done in every  
23 region by the three deputy secretaries.

24 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: What do you do  
25 when you visit the institutions?



1                   MR. BICKEL: Well, we inspect. What we'll  
2 have is, we have some preplanned things that we'll look  
3 at; i.e., training. We'll look at security things.  
4 We'll look at release procedures, security issues. So  
5 there's a plethora of stuff that we look at.

6                   MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: And your visit  
7 is with whom, management?

8                   MR. BICKEL: I'll meet with all staff.  
9 Initially, I will meet with the superintendent; and I'm  
10 just going to say how Tabb Bickel does it. What I do is  
11 I'll meet with the administrative team initially. We'll  
12 introduce ourselves. We'll talk about any problems that  
13 they have.

14                   At that point, I send a pre-issued thing,  
15 what I call talking points that I want to emphasize and  
16 talk about. After all that's done, then we'll go out  
17 and we'll do a tour of the institution where I'll meet  
18 with a variety of staff, to include counselors, food  
19 service, of course correctional officers, unit managers,  
20 all the staff that I can possibly run into, to include  
21 the offenders themselves.

22                   I will -- every tour I make, I make it a  
23 point to stand at least 45 minutes of setup where the  
24 feeding is going on, where I can look at the staffing  
25 levels, where I can talk to the correctional officers

1 that are assigned in there. And also at that time it  
2 gives me a good feel. I do have 27 years in and I can  
3 get a, not a perfect feel, but I can get a feel of the  
4 interaction of what's going on between the offenders and  
5 the staff.

6 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: Okay. It was  
7 suggested earlier, of course your testimony from the  
8 other folks that testified, that management is top-heavy  
9 throughout the Department.

10 Is that -- I know you gave us a detailed  
11 report of staffing, staffing levels. But can you just  
12 respond to that?

13 MR. RINGLER: I don't believe that to be  
14 accurate. Part of what was mentioned in previous  
15 testimony was the growth of management staff over the  
16 years in terms of adding unit management staff where it  
17 didn't exist previously.

18 Again, since I'm here over 30 years, and I  
19 was here at the time most of those decisions were made  
20 and dealt with the money and was involved in some of  
21 those decisions, when we looked at things like that, we  
22 were looking at managing smaller institutions and  
23 smaller pieces; and that's what a unit manager does.

24 Now, if there's complaints from inmates and  
25 stuff, we expect them to be resolved at lower levels of

1 the institutions before they have to filter out -- any  
2 issues become, you know -- leaves that facility. So  
3 that kind of portion was in there. We have not been  
4 increasing management staff significantly in any areas.

5 And the number in the vacancies in  
6 management staff, as well, is certainly a lot greater  
7 than it is, you know, with the corrections officers  
8 themselves.

9 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: Okay. Thank  
10 you. Representative Krieger?

11 REPRESENTATIVE KRIEGER: Thank you, Mr.  
12 Chairman. Two questions again: Thank you for being  
13 here. I know we've spoken before, I think, several  
14 years ago.

15 MR. RINGLER: Yes.

16 REPRESENTATIVE KRIEGER: On page 8 of your  
17 testimony, there's a chart there that mentions a note at  
18 the bottom. And the note says: There was a loss of 119  
19 Corrections Officers with the opening of SCI Benner and  
20 the closing of SCI Cresson and Greensburg.

21 What happened there, as far as -- why did we  
22 lose those 119 officers?

23 MR. RINGLER: Well, basically, what happened  
24 is when we opened a brand new institution at Benner,  
25 that was testified by other testifiers previously, that

1 these newer institutions that we have are more staff  
2 efficient, that you get a better line of sight on the  
3 cell blocks as well. So the new institution at Benner  
4 did not take as many corrections officers as we had  
5 combined at Cresson and Greensburg. So that's why those  
6 numbers had less.

7 I did want to say -- and I know because you  
8 and I had discussions on this -- only three staff were  
9 furloughed out of both of those facilities when we  
10 closed them, so others did get other jobs; and some of  
11 those, you know, have moved onto even other facilities  
12 as well.

13 REPRESENTATIVE KRIEGER: All right. Thank  
14 you. One real quick second question; it relates to some  
15 of the previous testimony: Mandatory overtime. Do you  
16 have data that you can share relating as to all the  
17 overtime, what percentage is mandatory versus what  
18 percentage is voluntary?

19 MR. RINGLER: I do not have that at this  
20 time. I did ask for our staff, because I thought that  
21 would be something good for us to know. We would have  
22 to go back, and I will go back and see with our staff.  
23 It would have to be an institution by institution  
24 consolidation to get. There's nothing in our system  
25 statewide that we could pull that information out. But

1 we can go back and look if we could get that. It would  
2 be very interesting, I think, for all of us to see that  
3 data.

4 REPRESENTATIVE KRIEGER: It would be useful.  
5 Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: Representative  
7 Regan for questions.

8 REPRESENTATIVE REGAN: Thank you, Mr.  
9 Chairman. Real quick question about intermediate  
10 weapons. Have you, at the DOC, investigated that?

11 MR. BICKEL: When you speak of intermediate  
12 weapons, are we talking about, like, the OC's, when they  
13 were talking about pepper spray?

14 REPRESENTATIVE REGAN: Yes.

15 MR. BICKEL: Absolutely. We have looked at  
16 it. I'm not sure we looked at it at the level of where  
17 we want to arm or have every staff member, or in  
18 particular, correctional officers, you know, having one.  
19 But we have looked at it to place it in strategic  
20 places, to issue it to officers that are assigned to the  
21 yard.

22 So, yes, that has been looked at. We  
23 haven't made any progress with it, but it has been  
24 looked at and has been talked about.

25 REPRESENTATIVE REGAN: Okay. But no

1 immediate plans to implement it?

2 MR. BICKEL: No, not at this time.

3 REPRESENTATIVE REGAN: Okay. Thank you.

4 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: Representative  
5 Barbin.

6 REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: Thank you. And  
7 thank you for your testimony. On the top-heavy issue  
8 that the Chairman raised and I think all of us are  
9 interested in, when I looked at your testimony it showed  
10 that there was 15,000 positions in the Department of  
11 Corrections and only 7,133 of those positions were  
12 actually line officer corrections.

13 Now, to me, that's less than half of all the  
14 employees that are Correction Officers. Now, I just  
15 don't understand your testimony that you're not  
16 top-heavy, if those -- what's the basis for you to say  
17 you're not top-heavy if only -- if less than half of the  
18 people that work for Corrections are actually in the  
19 security end of the jails?

20 MR. RINGLER: Okay. I can answer that. An  
21 institution's like a little city, in that inmates don't  
22 get out. All their different needs need to be attended  
23 to. They have to be fed. We have over 700 workers in  
24 food service that take care of that.

25 REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: Why should we have

1 those people when we don't have correction line  
2 officers? I mean, in the past, we had people that would  
3 get certificates from prison that were bakers. Before  
4 they left, they got a baking certificate. They got --  
5 people would come out of the prisons and they'd have --  
6 you're a dishwasher. We don't do that anymore.

7           And what it looks like to me, and I'm just  
8 looking at the numbers that you gave me, it looks like  
9 to me that we're more interested in -- and you got a  
10 page. Six tells you where all these people work, and it  
11 looks like we have more nurses, we have more drug and  
12 alcohol people, we have more facility manager, food  
13 service instructors than we do for the remainder of the  
14 security portion of the prison.

15           And you're telling us that you expect to  
16 have a \$200 million increased budget appropriation  
17 request for the next year. And you're basically saying  
18 two things: One, we're not going to put it in  
19 correction officers; and two, we're stuck because that's  
20 where the pensions and the medical costs are.

21           And what I'm asking you, wouldn't those  
22 costs be reduced if we weren't -- if we had more people  
23 in actual corrections and less people in auxiliary  
24 services?

25           MR. BICKEL: Okay. I think I'm following

1 along with you. I'm going to try to answer this the  
2 best I can. As you know, the PSCOA is an H1; that's our  
3 bargaining unit. All the food service staff are H1  
4 employees. All the maintenance staff, who supervise  
5 these inmates, there is not correctional officers  
6 assigned down into these kitchen areas, chow hall areas,  
7 except while the inmates are actually eating.

8           They are supervised at that point by H1  
9 members who are food service supervisors. Maintenance  
10 is the same thing. All maintenance workers are H1 under  
11 the PSCOA, and they are responsible to monitor their  
12 inmates while they are in their care.

13           REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: How many of the  
14 workers of the 15,000 are covered by the Corrections  
15 Officers Association union?

16           MR. RINGLER: I don't have the exact amount.  
17 It's over 10,000.

18           REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: Okay. So 10 out of  
19 15. Some of them are actually correction officers, some  
20 of them are supervisors, food or otherwise?

21           MR. BICKEL: Yes.

22           MR. RINGLER: Right.

23           REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: All right.

24           MR. BICKEL: And sergeants, yes.

25           REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: All right. Then I'm



1 looking at this thing, again, and the purpose of the  
2 hearing is to say, do we have an issue that we need to  
3 deal with because of a perceived lack of staffing of not  
4 these other people, but of the correction line officers?

5           And I'm looking at your last page, and all I  
6 use is the means versus extremes they taught you in  
7 ninth grade, a proportion. And the proportion tells me  
8 that your numbers, which are only good through  
9 September, when you factor it out for the remainder of  
10 the year with just a simple proportion, are the highest  
11 that they've ever been.

12           And the major incidents, both assaults on  
13 inmate on staff and assaults inmate on inmate are at all  
14 time highs. So while that's anecdotal information at  
15 the moment, if you just go back the last four years,  
16 there's a significant increase in those assaults.

17           And at the same time that there's an  
18 increase there's a significant decrease in the number of  
19 actual line officer correction staff that's in the  
20 facilities.

21           Now, I'm -- this hearing isn't about Cresson  
22 or Greensburg, but your testimony says that we got 120  
23 people, 119, that are no longer with us because of --  
24 maybe because they didn't like the drive to Benner,  
25 maybe because they didn't find some, you know, similar

1 position. But the bottom line is, there's 120 fewer of  
2 those security sort of positions that we haven't filled.

3 What can we do about it?

4 MR. RINGLER: Those positions -- every  
5 position that we have has a specified job or post  
6 related to it. We eliminated a number of posts, so  
7 there's not posts for those people to be filled in.

8 REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: But the testimony of  
9 Mr. Bowman, who's not connected to the union, says that  
10 if you don't put those people in place, then the  
11 problems for the people that are in the prison are  
12 greater.

13 Isn't it a fact that the people that are the  
14 correction officers in the prisons are more important to  
15 the overall safety of the institution than the  
16 counselor, the drug counselor, or the food instructor?

17 MR. BICKEL: For the safety, absolutely. I  
18 agree with you.

19 REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: Well, isn't that  
20 what we're supposed to be here for?

21 MR. BICKEL: Yeah, but I'm not sure I'm  
22 following you though. Nothing has decreased. I mean,  
23 when you look at the staffing surveys, okay, if they're  
24 supposed to have 260 correction officers, yes, the PSCOA  
25 is correct. They might not have 260 correctional

1 officers. But out of a staffing survey comes posts.  
2 Okay? That is what is filled. There is not one post,  
3 that I'm aware of, that has not been filled because of  
4 the hiring freeze. That's where the mandatory things  
5 come in. So I'm not sure I'm following where you're  
6 going, sir.

7 REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: Your last page  
8 says --

9 MR. BICKEL: I understand that, but I'm  
10 trying to explain it to you.

11 REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: -- the assaults went  
12 up by almost 70 percent in just the last four years.  
13 Okay? In addition, we have to deal with the issue,  
14 because it's oversight, of what happens at a state  
15 facility if a noncorrection officer is assaulted at a  
16 facility.

17 That's why we're here. Those things are  
18 happening; and we have to say, what's the cause of it?  
19 Is there something that we can do to make it a little  
20 safer? Your own assaults say the numbers are at  
21 historic highs. So shouldn't we be relooking at how  
22 we're allocating these positions to make the facilities  
23 safer? That's what I'm saying.

24 MR. RINGLER: If I can just comment on that.  
25 And, of course, you're referring to the major incidents

1 because the other assaults are down somewhat. But  
2 assaults are important, and I don't think in the end we  
3 can necessarily say for the current year yet that we can  
4 trend that because these things don't happen seasonally  
5 and those type of things, as well, so we can't  
6 necessarily say how many we see out there. But I get  
7 your point. I get your point.

8 REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: They're high. It's  
9 700 assaults on staff, not the major ones, just total  
10 numbers. Simple proportion, 700 versus 653 last year.  
11 That's an increase. It's a significant increase.

12 Assaults on inmates, 639 last year, about  
13 the same number this year. But the major ones are a  
14 significant increase. We're here to deal with those  
15 type of issues. What is it that we should be doing or  
16 should we just say, well, let's wait till we get more  
17 data and then we'll decide?

18 We're at the end of one four-year term.  
19 We've got to deal with these issues in the next term  
20 because our legislative term starts in January. We need  
21 to do something. What do you suggest we do?

22 MR. RINGLER: We look at, as I mentioned,  
23 assaults on an event basis; and it should be concerning.  
24 I don't mean to basically imply anything other than  
25 that. I was just referring to -- I don't think we can

1 necessarily relate that to staffing because we haven't  
2 seen any nexus in that. There are certain things that  
3 we've seen, and one is a large increase in the mentally  
4 ill population that the Department of Corrections has  
5 been getting.

6           That number, we've got at this point, over  
7 20 percent of our inmates now are on the mental-health  
8 roster; and that number has been growing significantly  
9 each year. We've made some changes just recently. We  
10 made a couple changes. One is that gangs are an issue  
11 in there. We've instituted a couple of housing units  
12 just to deal with those gang issues and mental-health.  
13 We've also done those.

14           Even -- those are contributing issues. It  
15 doesn't resolve that entire problem that you're bringing  
16 up. It should be looked at, no doubt about it.

17           REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: I have one last  
18 question. This just happened in Dauphin County, where  
19 there had been attacks on staff, as well as at Benner.  
20 Do you think it's a good idea for non-uniformed staff to  
21 have like the equivalent of an emergency button?

22           MR. BICKEL: They do. That's done. Yes,  
23 sir. Every staff member entering an institution will  
24 either have a radio or a par issued to them. Yes, sir.

25           REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: So does it require

1     them to talk, or does it --

2                   MR. BICKEL:   Well, it depends what kind they  
3     get.   Some they get will send an alarm out.   It depends  
4     on what institution you're in.

5                   REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN:   The lady that was  
6     raped at Benner, did she have --

7                   MR. BICKEL:   I can't answer that question.  
8     I don't know.

9                   REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN:   What I'm asking you  
10    then -- you say some kind of devices.   Is it a type of  
11    device that allows you just to push it and an emergency  
12    signal goes out?

13                   MR. BICKEL:   That's correct.   But again, it  
14    will depend on what institutions you're at.   Some will  
15    send out an alarm that'll just -- you know, that you'll  
16    hear it.   Another one will send out an alarm that will  
17    go to a computer that's being monitored by a CCT or a  
18    control center, so there's different things that are  
19    going on with that.

20                   REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN:   But is the device  
21    just a press (indicating)?

22                   MR. BICKEL:   Yes.

23                   REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN:   Okay.

24                   MR. BICKEL:   Yes.   Some of them you can even  
25    -- if it turns upside down will set an alarm.   Okay?   So

1 even if they would get taken down, it should send out an  
2 alarm. Some places have those type of devices.

3 REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: Thank you.

4 MR. BICKEL: Going back real quick, if I  
5 could, to try to answer your other question. We do take  
6 assaults very seriously. I take them very personally  
7 actually. In fact, my philosophy in Corrections are no  
8 inmate escapes, no staff assaults, no physical plan.  
9 And I came through the ranks, so I do take them very  
10 seriously.

11 Every time we have one, I look at it. But  
12 how we can do that, you know, it's a great question.  
13 We're dealing with a much more complex, aggressive  
14 inmate that has been known -- that I've ever seen in my  
15 27 years. I've never seen what I'm dealing with now.

16 As the PSCOA testified to, it's just a  
17 different caliber of individual that we're dealing with.  
18 With that being said, you know, adding more correctional  
19 officers, you know, would be taking away from, like you  
20 were saying, food service staff or H1 members and  
21 placing them there.

22 But, you know, also you got to remember,  
23 they're being assaulted, too. I mean, it's a very  
24 difficult thing. We take it serious. And, you know,  
25 we'll continue to monitor and do what we feel we can to

1 try to eliminate them.

2 REPRESENTATIVE BARBIN: Thank you.

3 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: Representative  
4 Benninghoff.

5 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: Thank you  
6 again. I want to thank the Committee and the Chairman  
7 for coming here. I just have one quick question. As we  
8 look through your data here, one thing I've noticed is  
9 there's not a whole lot of data in reference to the  
10 central office.

11 I do see a line item, but when we look at  
12 employee complements and things, I don't really see  
13 anything there unless I'm not reading it. So my quick  
14 question is: One, what's the total staff number at  
15 central office? Two, has there been -- what's the  
16 number of increases of employees there at central  
17 office?

18 When I look through your own provided data  
19 and I see overtime hours and overtime costs at central  
20 office, I'm sitting there thinking, one, aren't these  
21 management positions? Why is there overtime? And two,  
22 if I'm reading this right, you know, you're looking  
23 collectively and I do see the numbers have gone down  
24 over the years; but still, that's thousands and  
25 thousands of dollars that we could be putting into



1 officers baby-sitting the inmates.

2 That's just hard for me. And if you can't  
3 provide that today, great. Get it to the Committee.  
4 But I think we should know those, if you want to give us  
5 a total picture of Corrections. And I don't see it  
6 delineated specifically here for the central office.

7 MR. RINGLER: I can give you some  
8 information. It may not be down to the position and  
9 whatever. But starting with the last item that you  
10 mentioned, the overtime, almost all of that overtime is  
11 for corrections officers.

12 We have regional teams that are emergency  
13 response teams and whatever that have practices and  
14 whatever; and the K9 teams, they're all assigned to  
15 central office, so they're not management staff getting  
16 that --

17 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: So it's an  
18 accounting issue? It's an issue of accounting?

19 MR. RINGLER: Yes, it is.

20 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: Okay. Thank  
21 you.

22 MR. RINGLER: For the staff in central  
23 office, in our general government appropriation, we've  
24 been getting reductions in the last three, four years in  
25 that appropriation. We have 40-some vacancies now out

1 of a little over 400 positions, so we're probably right  
2 about the average level for the Department right now;  
3 and that includes the fact that other positions were  
4 taken away. And just recently there was another 12 that  
5 were removed from that appropriation.

6 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: So central  
7 office complements are somewhere around 400 with about  
8 40 vacancies?

9 MR. RINGLER: Right.

10 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: Okay. And then  
11 you said something -- last thing, that you created a new  
12 position, a superintendent at the academy?

13 MR. RINGLER: No. That position that I  
14 mentioned earlier at the academy was -- we have a person  
15 that is the director of the training academy, and we  
16 replaced that position. We hired someone from the  
17 National Institute of Corrections Academy there to run  
18 our academy.

19 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: But for a  
20 position that was already there; it wasn't newly  
21 created?

22 MR. RINGLER: That is correct.

23 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: Just a  
24 different body filling that position?

25 MR. RINGLER: That is correct.

1                   REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: Thank you.  
2 Appreciate that clarification. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
3 And again, I welcome everyone here in Bellefonte.

4                   MR. RINGLER: Excuse me. Can I say one more  
5 thing before -- in case you wanted, I truncated that  
6 list just for brevity sake. If the Committee would like  
7 a list of all the positions filled and vacant, we can  
8 submit that to you.

9                   MR. DYMEK: Well, actually it's one of my  
10 questions -- part of my question. I was just trying to  
11 understand, between Pages 6 and 7 of the submission  
12 here, on Page 6, for example, if you isolate out the  
13 CO's, the chart shows filled positions, vacant  
14 positions, total positions; and there are a certain  
15 number of vacancies list there.

16                   On Page 7, I know I'm looking apples to  
17 oranges, and I'm not sure what I'm seeing. On Page 7,  
18 this goes through a number of CO positions and concludes  
19 with a listed total difference of a net negative 8  
20 positions, which is obviously a disparity from what's on  
21 Page 6 when you look at filled versus vacant for a  
22 series of CO positions.

23                   So I'm not smart enough. I don't -- what am  
24 I not getting?

25                   MR. RINGLER: Okay. What's on page 7 is

1 basically the authorized positions that they have and  
2 the current positions filled or vacant. So the amount  
3 the institution's supposed to have, which is in a column  
4 called authorized positions. The current positions are  
5 the positions that they currently have. So there's a  
6 little deviation from what they currently have to what  
7 they're supposed to have.

8 MR. DYMEK: So then Page 7, again, so I'm  
9 understanding --

10 MR. RINGLER: These are just -- again, this  
11 was not to be cumulative. This is not a cumulative  
12 total. This is only the institutions that show  
13 differences between the authorized and current  
14 positions.

15 MR. DYMEK: I'm just trying to understand  
16 what the columns mean. So when it says, "current  
17 positions," that doesn't mean current employees, current  
18 persons, that means current positions; some may be  
19 vacant?

20 MR. RINGLER: That is correct.

21 MR. DYMEK: Okay. So that's why it's giving  
22 me different information. Thank you.

23 MR. RINGER: Right. And it's also not --  
24 all institutions aren't on there, so you couldn't add  
25 that up to get to the number of corrections officers

1 either.

2 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: So those  
3 positions that are authorized, who determines whether or  
4 not they're authorized or not?

5 MR. RINGLER: Eventually that would be --  
6 that would come up through the central office through  
7 the Manpower Surveys.

8 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: Based on  
9 budgetary concerns and --

10 MR. RINGLER: The authorized positions are  
11 based on the Manpower Surveys and the approvals. The  
12 actual filling of those positions then would be based on  
13 budget management and the institution.

14 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MARSICO: Right. Okay.  
15 Any other questions? Well, thank you very much for  
16 being up here and taking the time to provide testimony.

17 Like I said earlier, we're really concerned  
18 about having a safe work environment within the  
19 Department and the correction officers and all staff.

20 I want to thank the members for being here,  
21 and all staff. And this subject is not going to go  
22 away, as you know, as we said earlier. We guarantee  
23 we're going to have future dialogue, discussions, with  
24 the Department, with the Secretary, and with members of  
25 the Committee.

1                   And so next year, beginning of next year,  
2 we'll be fairly active, busy committee dealing with this  
3 topic and others. So, once again, thank you; and this  
4 concludes the hearing.

5                   MR. RINGLER: Okay.

6                   (Whereupon, the hearing concluded at 12:43 p.m.)  
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CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the proceedings and evidence are contained fully and accurately in the notes taken by me on the within proceedings and that this is a correct transcript of the same.

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Tracy L. Markle,  
Court Reporter/Notary