



Solving the Staffing Crisis: Concrete Action

The Stakes

- *The life expectancy of a correctional officer is only 59 years.*
- *“Long and difficult shifts... result in higher rates of PTSD than [that of] military veterans, [and] suicide rates twice as high as all other professions combined... [according to] researchers at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.”*



What is this Committee's Role in solving this Crisis?

We believe it is absolutely essential that this Committee uses the full weight of its oversight power to make sure that the Administration is fulfilling its responsibility to:

- *The public*
- *The incarcerated population in the facilities, and crucially...*
- *The staff working under inhumane conditions due to the crisis*

What Would this Level of Oversight Look Like?

- *Weekly Hearings*
- *Requiring Regular, In-Depth Data from the Administration*
- *JFO Analysis*



Northern State Correctional Facility in Newport, VT

Weekly Hearings: The Administration

Until the staffing crisis is resolved, we request that this Committee hold weekly hearings on the topic.

- *High-ranking Administration officials including, but not limited to,*
 - *The Secretary of Administration,*
 - *The Secretary of Human Services*
 - *The Commissioner of DHR, and*
 - *The Commissioner of Corrections...*

...should be in front of this Committee on a weekly basis

Weekly Hearings: Other States

The Committee Should Hear from the Departments of Corrections of other states that have better staffing levels in their publicly operated facilities to learn what has worked elsewhere.

Weekly Hearings: VSEA

- *The Committee should hear from VSEA every week so that we can pass along reports from our members about what is actually happening on the ground.*



Requiring Regular, In-Depth Data from the Administration

- *In 2024, VSEA provided a list of metrics to Joint Justice that we recommended the Legislature request of the Administration, so that relevant metrics you haven't historically received could paint a fuller picture of the problem.*
- *To our knowledge, most of these data still haven't been provided.*

Key Metrics to Review

Retention:

- Quarterly and Annualized CO I and CO II Turnover, separated by job class;
- Quarterly and Annualized CO I and CO II vacancy rate, separated by job class;
- Quarterly number of correctional officer shifts in excess of 12 hours (breakdown by facility may be helpful);
- Quarterly number of shifts a correctional officer was called in on their day off to cover a shift or partial shift (Breakdown by facility may be helpful);
- Quarterly number of shifts correctional officers were on-call on their day off (Breakdown by facility may be helpful).
- Quarterly number of shifts where people have volunteered to work on their day off.

Key Metrics to Review

Recruitment:

- Quarterly and annual correctional officer recruitment numbers;
- % of VCA graduates that complete their probationary period by VCA class (facility breakdown may be helpful);
- % of VCA graduates that complete 1 year of service by VCA class (facility breakdown may be helpful);
- % of VCA graduates that complete 2 years of service by VCA class (facility breakdown may be helpful);
- % of VCA graduates that complete 5 years of service by VCA class (facility breakdown may be helpful);

Key Metrics to Review

P&P Services:

- Quarterly and Annual Number of hours of on-call status worked by P&P officers on days off (regional breakdown may be helpful);
- Quarterly and annual numbers of hospital coverage call-in's performed by P&P officers on their day off (regional breakdown may be helpful);
- Quarterly and annual numbers of hospital coverage call-in's performed by P&P officers on during regular workday (regional breakdown may be helpful);

Key Metrics to Review

Inmate Services:

- Quarterly and annual lockdowns due to lack of staff (facility breakdown may be helpful);
- Quarterly and annual educational opportunities cancelled or postponed due to lack of staff (facility breakdown may be helpful);
- Quarterly and annual recreational opportunities cancelled or postponed due to lack of staff (facility breakdown may be helpful)
- Number of incidents resulting from missed bathroom breaks

Note: These statistics should be provided for the period of the last five years. Furthermore, the reporting should indicate periods during which a side letter agreement between VSEA and DOC was— or was not— in effect.

But not just quarterly— DAILY

This Committee should request that every week the Administration should send the DAILY schedules from each facility.



JFO Analysis

- *All of this data, both quarterly and daily, should be provided to Joint Fiscal, who would then compile regular, independent reports about what staffing actually looks like on the ground. You deserve the information to analyze how this crisis is going yourselves.*



Exit Interviews

This Committee should demand copies of anonymous exit interviews from every employee leaving frontline corrections service— exit interviews that are shared with the Committee.

A Closing Thought: All Hands on Deck

We ask this Committee to endorse our long-running call for managers in Central Office who already have completed the necessary training to take on security shifts in the facilities.