



The Guardian

News from the hardworking men and women of DOC

Members of Teamsters Local 117

Teamsters Local 117: 14675 Interurban Ave. S, Suite 307 • Tukwila, WA 98168 (206) 441-4860 • www.teamsters117.org

TEAMSTERS AT DOC ACHIEVE VICTORY ON 3 OF 4 BILLS!

The fight for safety, dignity, and respect continues



Teamsters from other jurisdictions join members at DOC to lobby for interest arbitration for correctional workers.



Officer John Christy of WSP

YOU ARE THE KEY ELEMENT!

By Correctional Officer John Christy

The 2011 legislative session will be a challenging year to be remembered. In terms of legislation that had meaning for correctional employees, it was a benchmark session. As correctional staff, we impressed the legislature with our fortitude, tenacity, and compassion. The legislative team assembled by Teamsters Local 117 of Tracey Thompson, Anna Jancewicz, James V. Smith II, Lily Wilson-Codega, and Paul Zilly set a enviable standard that will propel us through the years to come.

However, the most important member of this team was you, the Correctional Staff member. Without your energy, the legislation that was passed would not have gotten a second reading out of the legislative committees. Your power is huge. You have captured the attention of the public and the legislature. You have changed our image from "guards" to Correctional Officers. You changed us from "prison workers" to Correctional Professionals.

Your voice speaking directly to legislators is immensely powerful. Senator Steve Conway, of the 29th district around

In the war on workers, correctional employees have been fighting on the front lines.

With the State facing a \$5.3 billion deficit, Teamsters at DOC pushed hard in Olympia this session to pass legislation to improve staff safety in our state's prison system.

Now that the special session has concluded for 2011, we have some major victories to report and some important work that remains to be done.

3 OF 4 BILLS BECOME LAW!

Thanks to your tireless efforts, Teamsters at DOC were successful in helping to pass three bills that will make a direct impact on the lives of correctional employees, their families, and our communities.

- **HB 1290: Mandatory Overtime Exemption for DOC Nurses – PASSED!**
DOC can no longer force nurses who staff Washington's adult prisons to work unreasonably long shifts that had put them at greater risk of violent attacks!
- **HB 1041: Exempt Correctional Officers from Firearm Restrictions – PASSED!**
Correctional Officers will now be afforded the same right as other law enforcement professionals to carry concealed weapons to defend themselves and their families while off-duty!

A message from your Director of Corrections



SO WHAT ARE THE TEAMSTERS DOING FOR ME?

Despite the tireless work of active DOC members and your Union's staff these past few months, I am still surprised to hear members ask, "So what are the Teamsters doing for me?" Let's recap just the past few months.

Local 117 was the only Union left in this State fighting the ESSB 6503 furloughs to non-custody staff. Well...VICTORY!

On May 5th, Arbitrator Vivencio concluded that the furloughs violated your Union's collective bargaining agreement with the State. Among other things, the Department was directed to make affected employees whole for any economic losses resulting from the 6503 furloughs, including lost wages and interest. Your Union's legal team is currently working on the remedy, and determining how this decision will affect your Union's other pending grievance on expanded-TLOs to custody staff.

On the political front, your efforts in Olympia resulted in passage of three of your Union's four bills. The Governor signed these bills into law the week of May 2d: HB1290 (prohibitions on mandatory overtime for DOC nurses), HB1041 (concealed carry firearm exemptions for qualified DOC employees), and HB1334 (civil judgments against offenders for assaults on DOC members). Unfortunately, we were not successful at achieving interest arbitration for DOC employees, but like The Terminator, we 'will be back' next session with even more member involvement.

As for the NIC findings, the DOC safety bill (ESB 5907) was signed by the Governor on May 5th, and negotiations over implementation of that bill are underway. The Department is establishing the Local Security Advisory Committees at each institution from names provided by your Union. The Department and your Union are meeting on May 17th to begin discussions on an OC Spray pilot at MCC (WSR), AHCC, and CBCC, to start. An 8-hour shift schedule pilot will be commencing at MCC beginning June 1st, and may spread to three other institutions (undetermined) in the summer. New microphones are being ordered to pilot at MCC and part of WSP.

Your Union has increased the number of DOC Shop Stewards by over 25%, and on March 11th, they were provided with critical training on the rights of DOC members. On March 17th, Q13 Fox News aired a special report entitled, "Inmates In Charge: Our Prisons Exposed," featuring DOC members from MCC and your Union speaking-out on safety issues in our prisons. Secretary-Treasurer Tracey Thompson has also been outspoken on radio and print media to defend DOC members.

I cannot stress enough how critically important it is that we stand together as one unified group to fight for the safety, dignity, and respect for all correctional employees. If you still hear members asking, "So what are the Teamsters doing for me?," perhaps ask them, "What are you doing for YOUR Union?" Let's pull together folks. As always, thank you for your service.

Respectfully,

James V. Smith II
Director of Corrections and Law Enforcement

OFFICER CHRISTY

Continued from Page 1

Lakewood, told me he would rather hear from the "real people doing the real jobs." That's you he is talking about. Any one of you can do this.

Correctional officers and staff members are eminently qualified to present our story to the lawmakers of Washington State. Why? Because you communicate with the law "breakers" of the State everyday. If you can talk to the most violent offenders with ease as part of your profession; talking to a senator or a representative is child's play.

Look around and contact the people from your institution that took the time to travel to Olympia. They sacrificed their time and energy to benefit you. Thank them and ask what you can do to help next legislative session.

I don't look at the bills that did not pass this session as a failure of our commitment. I look at them as a rallying point for the 2012 legislative session. I hope to see more of you next year in Olympia. Bring your presence to next year's session because you are the most important member of the legislative team.

Be safe out there and get your brothers and sisters home to their families.

John Christy
Correctional Officer
Washington State Penitentiary

Officer John Christy is truly an amazing leader in the fight for staff safety at DOC. John has gathered hundreds of petition signatures, published letters to the editor, participated in every picketing action and rally, spoken out in the media, made phone calls, sent emails, and made countless trips from Walla Walla to Olympia to testify in legislative hearings and lobby his representatives in the fight for correctional workers' rights.

Thank you, Officer Christy, for your tremendous work and endless energy and dedication to the correctional family!



The Teamsters Action Truck rolls into eastern Washington to build power and fight back.

TEAMSTER RODEO IN EASTERN WASHINGTON

Teamster Action Truck Rolls through Pasco, Connell, and Walla Walla

The big blue Teamsters Action Truck rolled through three eastern Washington towns in April to fight back in the ongoing attacks on workers here in Washington State and across the country.

The first stop was Connell, where the wind was howling, but spirits were high, as 100 members at CCRC stopped by the truck to grab a bite to eat and sign online petitions against proposals threatening staff safety and collective bargaining rights this legislative session in Olympia.

BUILDING POWER THROUGH DRIVE

At CCRC, an amazing 42 members signed up as new DRIVE contributors! DRIVE, or Democratic – Republican – Independent – Voter – Education, is the Teamsters’ political action committee.

With the corporate powers outspending working families on politics 15-1, DRIVE is a critically important way that your Union can build political power to fight anti-worker initiatives, like the attack on collective bargaining rights in Wisconsin.

DRIVE funds voter registration, rallies,

phone banks, news conferences, and voter education on issues of concern to working people. DRIVE is non-partisan and independent from any political party. *If you would like to contribute to DRIVE, talk to your Business Representative.*

PASCO AND WALLA WALLA

The second day of the tour, the truck stopped at the Building Trades Council in Pasco, where over 300 members of the labor community participated in a rally organized by the Teamsters and our coalition partners at the Washington State Labor Council.

The last stop on the tour was Walla Walla, where over 100 members from WSP turned out, and an incredible 56 members signed DRIVE cards!

All in all, the tour was a phenomenal success and will lay the groundwork for future campaigns and rallies across the state.

A huge thanks to all of the Teamsters at DOC who turned out in Connell, Pasco, and Walla Walla, and to the Washington Teamsters JC 28 and Teamsters Local 174 for their tremendous support!

MOVING FORWARD ON BFOQ

After months of inaction from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) on the BFOQ issue, your Local Union is taking matters into its own hands.

Rather than waiting for the EEOC to rule on BFOQ, your Union’s legal team has requested a “right to sue” letter, which would allow us to file a federal discrimination lawsuit against the State.

We anticipate that our request will be granted and that we will file suit as early as June of this year.

To gain further control of the process, your Union’s legal team has also decided to take the case in house, rather than have it be handled by outside counsel.

DOC continues to misclassify positions as BFOQ only and your Local Union has filed additional grievances with respect to new BFOQ positions.

Any case of disparate treatment related to BFOQ involving male or female officers should be directed to Business Representative Michelle Woodrow at Michelle.Woodrow@teamsters117.org or 206-441-4860 ext. 1264.

OFFICER JAYME BIENDL MEMORIAL COIN



In honor of our fallen Sister, Officer Jayme Biendl, members of Teamsters Local 117 have created the Officer Jayme Biendl Memorial Coin.

The cost per coin is \$20. Proceeds from the coin donations will go directly to the Jayme Biendl Benevolent Fund, which was established by Teamsters Local 117 to offset funeral expenses, with all remaining funds going to Officer Biendl’s family.

To order the Officer Jayme Biendl Memorial Coin, visit your Local Union’s website at www.teamsters117.org.

A limited supply of coins is available, so order soon. *Thank you for supporting Officer Biendl’s family!*

FIGHT IN OLYMPIA

Continued from Page 1

- **HB 1334: Authorizing Civil Judgments for Assault – PASSED!** *Inmates who assault correctional officers or other DOC employees will now be required to pay damages to those employees! Special thanks to Officer Darren Kelly of AHCC, whose leadership made the passage of HB 1334 possible!*

All three bills have been sent to the Governor and signed into law. (For more detailed information on all three of these bills, visit the Washington State Legislature's website at www.leg.wa.gov.)

MEMBER INVOLVEMENT KEY TO SUCCESS

Our success in passing these bills should not be underestimated. Given the state's massive budget deficit, the push for fiscal austerity, and stiff opposition from the Office of Financial Management, we prevailed against tremendous odds.

Your involvement in political action activities has made all the difference. That involvement started in earnest long before this legislative session got underway, with the community legislative forums late last year.

Between October and November 2010, Teamsters at DOC squared off with legislators in four town hall forums, demanding safer working conditions. The forums inspired Teamster correctional employees to put greater political pressure on legislators. We demanded change through emails, postcards, letters, lobby visits, and picketing actions.

These activities culminated in a **Day of Action** on December 8, when more than 400 correctional workers, their families, and other Teamster members converged on the State Capitol demanding safety, dignity, and respect.

Then, in January, tragedy struck. Officer Jayme Lee Biendl was senselessly



murdered in the chapel of the Monroe Correctional Complex. Correctional employees across the state were outraged, angry, and upset. The murder of one of our own was a tragic illustration of the need to change a broken system.

As the legislative session got underway, correctional workers paid tribute to their fallen Sister and began engaging in the fight for their lives to achieve safety improvements at the DOC.

We spoke out in greater numbers than ever before, in letters, phone calls, lobby visits, at rallies, in the media, and in legislative hearings. We responded to almost daily email action alerts; we spoke truth to power in the media; and we answered the call to travel to Olympia at a moment's notice.

Your tireless work has made an impact. By the end of the session, we can claim a remarkable 75% success rate, with three of the four bills that we supported passing into law. Only interest arbitration for correctional employees was unattainable; in the end, political cowardice and the excuse of the state's economic crisis were obstacles too great to overcome.

THE FIGHT FOR SAFETY CONTINUES

But the fight for staff safety at DOC is far from over. Your Local Union is deeply committed to securing interest arbitration rights for correctional employees. We are exploring all options for achieving that goal, including taking the issue to the voters through the initiative process. Once again, we will be calling on you for your support because, in the end, your participation in the process will be the key to success.

Thank you to all of the proud Teamsters at the DOC and throughout the Union who have helped improve staff safety in our prisons. Your time, energy, courage, determination, and unyielding pursuit of justice have already made a tremendous difference in the lives of correctional workers in our state.

And the fight has just begun.

WELCOME NEW LOBBYIST AND ASSOCIATE STAFF ATTORNEY, TERESITA TORRES



Teresita Torres

It has been a tumultuous legislative session in Olympia this year, and your Local Union has fought intensely to pass legislation to protect and expand the rights of working people across our State.

Throughout the session, Local 117 Lobbyist and Staff Attorney, Anna Jancewicz, has been instrumental in ensuring that our interests in Olympia are represented.

Sadly, Anna, who has been with the Local for five years, left us at the end of the regular session and relocated to Washington D.C. We thank Anna for her tremendous work in fighting to defend the rights of working people, and we wish her all of the best as she embarks on her new adventure in the other Washington!

At the same time, we are excited to announce a new addition to the Local 117 staff. Teresita Torres joined us on May 2, 2011 as your Local Union's new Lobbyist and Staff Attorney.

Teresita earned a Bachelor's Degree from The Evergreen State College in Olympia and a law degree from Seattle University School of Law.

After graduating from law school, Teresita worked as a Legislative Aide to Speaker of the House, Frank Chopp, and Representative Mark Ericks, during the 2005 session. She was thereafter hired as a Civil Rights Investigator by the Washington State Human Rights Commission.

Teresita is an active member of the Washington State and Thurston County Bar Associations, Latino Washington Bar Association, Latino Community Resource Group and Hispanic Women's Network. We welcome her to Teamsters Local 117 and wish her a successful start in her new job!