



The Guardian

News from the hardworking men and women of DOC

Members of Teamsters Local 117

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Local 117 leads coalition to prevent DOC closures

Teamsters Local 117 has partnered with a group of public safety advocates in an effort to prevent closures and the elimination of capacity at the Department of Corrections.

In a full-page open letter published on Monday, February 1 in the Seattle Times, Tacoma News Tribune, Olympian, and the Columbian, the group called on the Governor and the Washington State Legislature to reject the elimination of beds at DOC on the grounds that closures will jeopardize public safety. The letter was published in the Walla Walla Union Bulletin on Tuesday, February 2.

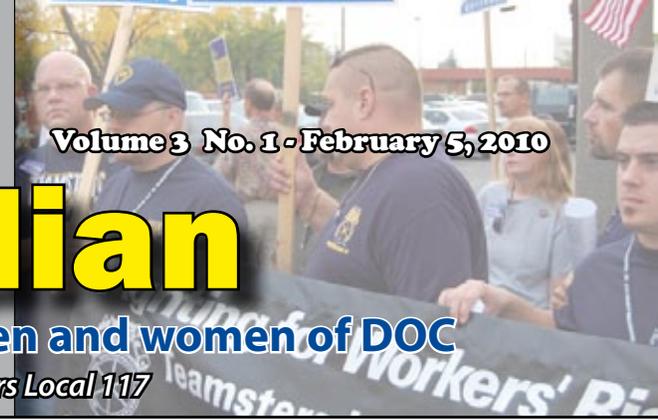
Supporters of the letter included King County Prosecuting Attorney Dan Satterberg, Lakewood Chief of Police Bret Farrar, Executive Director of Families and Friends of Violent Crime Victims Jenny Wieland, President of the Pierce County Corrections Officers and Sergeants Guild Doug Johnson, President of the Washington State Patrol Troopers Association Tom Pillow, and the Pierce County Deputy Sheriff's Guild, Local 1889.

To read the letter in full, visit the Teamsters Local 117 website at www.teamsters117.org.

Members at LCC lobby to save Larch

Six Teamsters Local 117 members from the Larch Corrections Center in Yacolt, WA, along with a group of Union representatives, met with key legislators in Olympia on Thursday, January 21, in an effort to halt the proposed closure of that institution.

"The Governor's proposal to close Larch and other critical prison units across the State may jeopardize public safety and would



Don't jeopardize public safety!

An open letter regarding the proposed closure of critical units at the Washington State Department of Corrections

To: Governor Christine Gregoire
Members of the State House of Representatives
Members of the State Senate

We are employees of the adult corrections facilities of the State of Washington, public safety advocates, representatives of law enforcement, public officials, and concerned citizens, and we are urging the Legislature to reject proposals in the Governor's budget which call for the elimination of capacity in our State's correctional institutions.

In 2007, the Washington State Institute for Public Policy determined that the felony recidivism rate is between 47 and 57 percent for high risk offenders. It is impossible to predict the recidivism and first-time criminal conviction rate over the next five years, but it is reasonable to assume that both crime and recidivism rates will increase in an economy of high unemployment.

In the current economic climate, we are especially concerned that inmates released by the Department of Corrections (DOC) will be unable to find gainful employment and that they will therefore be more likely to return to the DOC system. If you enact the Governor's proposed prison and unit closures, we will likely not have enough room to house repeat offenders nor will we have an adequate number of nurses or counselors to treat and rehabilitate those offenders intent on returning to our communities to resume healthy and productive lives.

You put our communities at risk if you fail to properly staff and maintain sufficient bed capacity in our State's prison system. We understand the need for better efficiencies and the need for consolidation, but we cannot afford to sacrifice public safety in the process.



Teamsters Local 117 Members
Department of Corrections

Dan Satterberg, Prosecuting Attorney
King County, WA

Jenny Wieland, Executive Director
Families & Friends of Violent
Crime Victims

Bret Farrar, Chief of Police
Lakewood, WA

Tom Pillow, President
Washington State Patrol Troopers
Association

Doug Johnson, President
Pierce County Corrections Officers and
Sergeants Guild

Pierce County Deputy Sheriff's
Independent Guild, Local 1889

PROTECT PUBLIC SAFETY: Call the legislative hotline in Olympia at 1-800-562-6000 and tell your representatives to support a budget that protects public safety. Call today!



Teamsters Local 117. 16,000 working men and women making our communities strong.
Tracey A. Thompson, Secretary-Treasurer

LARCH LOBBY GROUP

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likely increase the State's costs in the long run," said Teamsters Local 117 Secretary-Treasurer, Tracey A. Thompson, who stated the Union's opposition to the closures in legislative hearings throughout the day on January 21.

In addition to the Larch closure, the Governor's 2010 State budget proposal calls for a reduction of the McNeil Island Corrections Center (MICC) and the possible closure of one unit at the Washington State Penitentiary (WSP).

In their meetings at the State Capitol on Thursday, the Larch lobbying team presented legislators with statistics showing how keeping Larch open would benefit the local community and the State.

A closure, the group said, would deplete the Clark County region of important inmate labor performing forestry maintenance and firefighting, which saves the Department of Natural Resources between \$6000 and \$12,000 a day per 20-member crew. Union members also noted that Clark County has the highest unemployment rate in the State at 14.3% and would suffer additional job losses as a



Local 117 members from LCC meet with State legislators

result of the closure.

Said Local 117 member, Sergeant Mark Francis, who attended the meetings, "We clearly showed them that closing Larch would be unproductive. If they mothball Larch, they will still need to maintain the facility and it is likely that DOC will need the beds again in three to five years."

Pressure is mounting on the Governor to scale back proposed cuts at Larch and at other institutions at the Department of Corrections. On January 21, 12 legislators in Southwest Washington sent a letter to the Governor stating their concerns about the proposed Larch closure.

Take action in Olympia on Feb. 10!

Support legislation that helps compensate Corrections' employees after an assault



Make your voice heard!

Join Teamsters Local 117 members and staff in Olympia on Wednesday, February 10, 2010 for a hearing that may decide the fate of legislation that would allow money to be deducted from an inmate's

wages or benefits for the purpose of satisfying a civil judgment awarded to a DOC employee who is injured by the inmate.

We are specifically looking for members who would be willing to testify and sign on in support of the bill.

For more information, talk to your Business Representative or call Teamsters Local 117 Government Relations Coordinator, Anna Jancewicz at 206-441-4860 ext. 1258.