

# Correctional Staff Fact Sheet

## ISSUES FOR OUR LEGISLATORS TO CONSIDER – Public Safety is at Risk

- In 2002, the legislature, in order to avoid a crisis of employment, passed a retention bill or “CAREER LADDER” KRS 196.160. This was done in order for raises to be given at certain intervals of a career to keep and maintain an experienced and professional workforce at our state prison facilities. This CAREER LADDER was never funded. **Not once.** Now, we are in the crisis mode that the retention bill was meant to prevent.
- Correctional Staff turnover statewide has increased since 2009 and currently is at 34%.
- Over 600 vacancies exist at the Department of Corrections and the #1 reason given for leaving the ranks is low pay.
- The Correctional Officer turnover rate statewide is 67%! Unsustainable!
- Medical costs increase, cost of living increases and their pay stays level. This means for the past 8 years their ability to make a living has decreased substantially, yet they are expected to operate professionally while tired from mandatory overtime in a high stress atmosphere.
- In an atmosphere of high stress and in close proximity with dangerous inmates we need experienced, rested and adequately paid employees. Due to the massive loss of employees -overtime is mandatory with many working every day and/or 12 hour shifts- causing quality of life issues and burnout even among our most loyal staff.
- The state spends over \$5 million dollars a year in overtime. Add in the high cost of training and manpower that is shifted from operating the facility to finding and hiring new employees you will see we are already spending the money that could be used to give needed raises and fully fund the Career Ladder. If we shift our priority to fully funding the Career Ladder we can have a workforce that is refreshed and experienced versus one that is overworked and tired.
- Constant turnover of staff generates high levels of stress to career staff. Did you know PTSD average rates for Correctional Officers in the US is 31%? Compared to Iraq/Afghanistan veterans at 20%. The Prison organization that experiences understaffing, overtime, rotating shift work and supervisor demands creates high stress which in turn can create opportunities for bad things to happen.
- We have gambled that nothing bad will happen for far too long. Our Correctional Staff has done all they can to keep a professional workforce. We have overworked them and expected more while giving them less. It’s time we consider the enormous pressure we have put on our Correctional Staff across the state and fund an adequate raise and fully fund the Career Ladder. Let’s make them a priority this year in the budget before it’s too late.

# **Kentucky State Police Staff Fact Sheet**

## **ISSUES FOR OUR LEGISLATORS TO CONSIDER – Public Safety is at Risk**

- There has not been a significant raise since 2006 for Kentucky State Police Staff.
- An officer with 5 years experience makes \$10,000 less than the average officer in the 7 states bordering Kentucky. An officer with 15 years experience makes \$20,000 less.
- When a Kentucky State Trooper retires at 25 years of service, without pay increases, the officer would retire making \$39,251.00 per year – the average retiree in the 7 surrounding states is \$65,623.00 per year.
- Due to changes to the retirement for Kentucky State Police employees - the incentive of retiring with good benefits in 20 years no longer exists. Coupled with the lowest pay in a seven state area, recruitment is very difficult and getting worse.
- All across America the number of those seeking to enter law enforcement is declining, which may be due to the attack our officers are under in certain places.
- In KY, State Police rank 24<sup>th</sup> in pay among all other policing agencies.

**You are cordially invited to take a tour of the Kentucky State Penitentiary and/or West Kentucky Correctional Complex or a facility near you to learn more.**

**Thanks! Wade White, Lyon County Judge Executive, [lyoncountyjudge@gmail.com](mailto:lyoncountyjudge@gmail.com)**

I invite you to **watch our short video on our website** about these issues with interviews of those who work in Corrections and for the Kentucky State Police. Visit our site today.

**PLEASE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO *STAND FOR THOSE WHO STAND GUARD FOR US.***

**WEBSITE: [www.paythebadge.com](http://www.paythebadge.com)**

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