

My name is George Peterson, First of all due to policy, I must state that I am giving my own opinion, am here on my own time, and I am in no way representing the MDOC. That being said, I have worked for the MDOC for almost 18 years. First starting as a CMM overseeing an inmate crew in a High Pressure steam plant at CCF, then becoming a CO/CTI overseeing an inmate crew in CCF's WWTP. After this, I promoted to Correctional Plant Maintenance Engineer for CCF and MVYDC. During my professional career, I have been a heavy wheeled vehicle mechanic in the US Army- "Hooah". I have worked as an Auto MechPanic in auto dealerships, as well as been a Maintenance Supervisor at Irving Tanning then Head of Maintenance for Hinkley Yacht Company at their Jet Boat division then on to Lead Engineer at Mayo Regional Hospital. During these years I have obtained a 3<sup>rd</sup> class Stationery Steam Engineers license, I have taken multiple Hydraulics courses as well as vibration analysis courses and pump rebuild courses put on by KVCC. Also I have taken an online course to be a locksmith as well as testing and obtaining my Class B CDL license and testing and getting my Drinking Water License for CCF and my Commercial Master Applicators license as well as MY inspection licenses for fleet vehicles as well as buses and trucks for the facility. The position I currently hold for the now MVCF and have for approximately 12-13 years in different capacities. In this time I have seen many things happen that I found to be totally unacceptable to employees and myself. From watching our retirement benefits being reduced, to furlough days for only supposed non-essential employees, to pay freezes that went on for years. This doesn't scratch the surface of the other unacceptable things I have seen.

In or around 2008 myself, CO/CTI Leon Gerry and CSM Tom Sands stood in front of this committee, probably not many of the same legislators that are now present, but yet in this committee we were given a letter of thanks for being willing to adjust our schedules to help burn wood around the clock, 7 days a week, during the winter, to save Dorm 3 from closing at CCF. At this time Leon Gerry and I were considered essential employees. When the summer schedule began, Leon Gerry and I were told we had to start taking furlough days. This amounted to 20 days in 2 years.

Since then there have been a lot of things that have made me want to quit the MDOC, especially MVCF. The reason I stay is for the retirement and benefits; also, I live within 14 miles of the facility.

Since 2016 I have watched Maintenance personnel leave due to the fact that they were made to feel that they were neither respected enough as individuals or as professionals, and it made a job that is already tough, unbearable. Many of these people are licensed professionals, from Correctional Electricians, to Correctional Plumbers, to Office associates, as well as many other positions.

LD 1019 Part DDDD made it very clear that the \$6.5 Million was to go to Correctional Employees for retention purposes, but the MDOC decided who they would give it to. This made people who have professional licenses, and must maintain them to keep their positions, work right next to or with employees that are not required to have professional licensing or back grounds in different trades. This is not to say that Corrections is not a skill set; it is a very demanding profession.

These people that did not receive the Stipend have inmate crews that they are responsible for as well as do their work and try to train these inmates to give them a skill set to help fight recidivism. These jobs put the staff that do them in direct contact with inmates with hand tools like carpentry knives or chainsaws or pulp hooks and axes as well as nail guns and hammers as well as many other things that can be used as a weapon. I myself have had as many as 16-20 inmates out working by myself. These positions don't carry pepper spray or Tasers or any other devices. We can be miles away from the facility with no chance for back up. Also many times, these positions (in times of man power issues) have been used in all facets of Correctional duties. A lot of us have been sent in to hand cuff inmates in a pod or dorm or a work site to transport them to a more secure facility. Also many of us have been used to deescalate issues that could put a fellow employee or a civilian harm's way.

Many times in the past I have been used when we had mass influx of inmates to fill a dorm just opened, to help with strip searches or movement as well as many of my colleges. This has caused many employees that did not receive the stipend feel like they were not appreciated and definitely the MDOC had no concern about us nor did they respect us or our professions.

Personally I can say I look at it as the MDOC owes me \$25000 - \$30000 dollars. I also know that MDOT got a \$2.00 an hour raise due to being able to save taxpayers a large sum of money. If the employees of the DOC that have back ground in the trades could get the DOC to listen we could save the taxpayers far more than that.

Thank you for your time. If I can ever be of assistance please don't hesitate to get in touch with me.