



SUPREME COURT HEARS ARGUMENTS, FIRES QUESTIONS AT BOTH SIDES

As expected, the Michigan Supreme Court heard arguments in the 4 percent pension lawsuit and the Right to Work suit Tuesday.

Reactions to the hearings were mixed. Some reporters and spectators from MCO thought justices questioned both sides equally, while others say they seemed to go easier on the state's attorneys. Keep in mind, the court has a 5-2 Republican majority.

Central to Tuesday's arguments was a debate over how much authority the Civil Service Commission actually has. In the 4 percent case, more than one justice brought up the fact that the MCSC has no funding mechanism independent of the legislature, which seems to undermine its ability to make pension decisions.

Attorneys also disagreed on what it means for the MCSC to regulate

conditions of employment, as stated in the Michigan Constitution. The state's attorney argued a collective bargaining agreement is not a condition of employment.

A more in-depth story will be in the next MCO Report.

The justices have no deadline in making a decision. We'll keep you updated.

AROUND THE COUNTRY: TEXAS PRISON BUS CRASH KILLS 10; ARAMARK FOOD PROTESTS CONTINUE AT THE OAKS

Two officers and eight prisoners died in a catastrophic prison bus crash in west Texas this week.

The bus slid off an overpass, fell down an embankment and collided with a freight train. Ten people on the bus were killed, and the five others on the bus were taken to hospitals for serious injuries, according to media reports. No one on the train was hurt. The train was carrying UPS packages, which were strewn across the wreck site.

The deceased officers have been identified as Christopher Davis, 53, and Eligio Garcia, 45. Garcia's funeral is tomorrow and Davis' is scheduled

for next week.

Please pray for all of those involved.

Hundreds of inmates skipped meals on New Year's Eve and Jan. 2 at ECF.

They were protesting food quality and kitchen conditions. Prisoners heard the state pays Aramark per meal served, so they stayed in their housing units during lunch those two days, an officer said.

On Dec. 31, 57 out of about 370 Level II inmates went to chow. On Jan. 2, 384 out of about 740 Level IV prisoners ate.



IN MEMORIAM: JIM PAFFEL, RANDY HINDS

It's with a heavy heart

we share two retirees have passed away.

Randy Hinds worked at the Oaks. He started in 1987 and retired in 2008. No funeral arrangements have been announced, an Oaks officer said.

Jim Paffel worked at the Forensic Center for 25 years. He retired in 2006. A celebration of his life will be 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Jan. 24 at the Harry J. Will Funeral Home in Wayne, MI.

Please keep the family and friends of these men in your thoughts. May they rest in peace.

MCO ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR CHIEF OF STAFF POSITION

The Michigan Corrections Organization is seeking a Chief of Staff.

The position will begin spring 2015. The COS would be responsible for supervising approximately nine staff and would work under the direction of the MCO Executive Board.

Other responsibilities would include overseeing/directing MCO programs and policies. General knowledge of labor issues, politics

and the legislative process are needed. A pro-union philosophy is required.

The position requires some in and out of state travel and occasional night or weekend work. Salary is commensurate with knowledge and experience and includes health and pension benefits.

Email cover letter and resume to anita@mco-seiu.org.

STAFFING CRISIS!

MCO continues to press the MDOC to bring back the Correctional Officer Academy.

With less than 60 new recruits now being trained at six community colleges, MDOC will continue to suffer increased vacancies as officers retire. Overtime and mandatory overtime is through the roof. MCO will not give up and is talking to legislators as well, as they are about to begin budget discussions.