



Michigan Corrections Organization

Service Employees International Union Local 526M

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April 18, 2018

The Honorable Arlan Meekhof
Senate Majority Leader
State Capitol
P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909-7536

Dear Senator Meekhof,

For over 50 years, the Michigan Corrections Organization (MCO) has represented corrections officers across the state of Michigan.

During that time, we have fought for many changes in the department. Some changes have given officers better tools to do the job while others have focused on increasing safety and security for all staff.

Regardless of the issue, we have always conducted ourselves as professionals and approached the challenges in a safe and responsible manner.

Today, we are again faced with changes within the department of corrections and are troubled by the recent senate proposal to reduce funding for officer training and close an additional prison.

The MDOC is on the record stating that excess capacity does not currently exist within the corrections system and projections do not warrant an additional closure. MCO fully agrees with this assessment.

It is no secret that facilities across Michigan are severely understaffed (600-700 CO's statewide) and officers are being asked to do more with less.

Forcing an additional closure would result in further overcrowding of facilities, place staff at risk and jeopardize offender success by reducing the ability to provide much needed programming and educational opportunities.

As professionals, we understand the budget challenges our department faces but believe strongly that de-carceration must be done safely and responsibly.

As the budget process continues to move forward, MCO remains committed to being a resource and would welcome the opportunity to share the collective knowledge and expertise of front line staff.

Respectfully,
Michigan Corrections Organization, SEIU Local 526M, Executive Council

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