



Michigan Corrections Organization

Service Employees International Union Local 526M

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This has been a year of incredible challenges for corrections officers. COVID-19 has made our work even more stressful and more dangerous.

In 2021, MCO leaders and staff will be renewing our efforts to educate legislators, the governor, and the public on the brutal conditions MCO members are enduring at work. **Our top two priorities continue to be restoring leave time used for department-required quarantine and securing hazard pay.**

Here is what we need from members:

- [Fill out this form](#) to tell us about the impact of COVID-19 at your facility.
- [Fill out this form](#) if you have tested positive or have been forced to use sick or annual leave (or lost time) due to a close contact at work.

Below is a recap of what MCO leaders have done this year to advocate for staff throughout this pandemic and how we will continue this work in 2021. [You can find more information on our website.](#)

At the onset of the pandemic in March, MCO President Byron Osborn sent formal letters outlining members' concerns to [MDOC Director Heidi Washington](#) and [Gov. Gretchen Whitmer](#).

We immediately took steps to show the public that corrections officers are essential staff who are putting their health on the line. We advocated for PPE and fairness, like restoration of leave used to quarantine due to a close contact at work. We told stories of [officers distancing themselves](#) from family and [making sacrifices](#). Though our partner One Voice United, [we secured important changes in a federal act](#) that allows the survivors of COs who die from COVID-19 to receive benefits.

We fought for premium pay, and when Michigan received federal COVID relief in April, the governor authorized using \$68 million for premium pay for state employees, resulting in officers receiving an additional \$750 per pay period worked.

When personnel staff incorrectly told members they didn't qualify for workers' comp if they contracted the virus, we [set the record straight](#) and partnered with a law firm to assist members in filing their paperwork. We got the governor to [issue an order](#) clearly stating prison staff won't have to prove where they contracted COVID-19 to be eligible for workers' compensation.

We compiled lists of rapid testing sites so members could get results, and possibly return to work, sooner. We called hotels around the state and negotiated discounts for officers who did not want to take the virus home to their families.

In late summer, [we publicly called out Director Washington](#) for her failure of leadership with a vote of no confidence and informational pickets. MDOC leaders had a staffing crisis on their hands long before COVID-19 struck, but the virus made a bad situation worse.

Our top two priorities in 2021 continue to be restoration of leave time and securing additional hazard pay. In July, we filed a statewide grievance to restore leave credits used for department-required quarantines. We are also filing an injunction asking a judge to order the MDOC to immediately stop forcing staff to use their own leave time.

Proudly representing correctional and forensic officers

MCO leaders and staff will continue pushing OSE and the governor for extra compensation to recognize the added risks officers are facing, whether it comes from the federal budget, state budget, or elsewhere.

Please stay up to date with MCO in the new year for updates. [Visit our website frequently](#) and join our members-only [Facebook group](#).

MCO leaders and staff thank COs, ARU investigators, CTOs, FSAs, and all members for the extraordinary sacrifices they are making during this pandemic.

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