

Chairs Sollman and Evans, and members of the committee,

I work at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution as a corrections officer. I work mandatory overtime at least 2 or 3 times per week. I sign up for voluntary overtime every week, hoping that I won't get forced into mandated overtime, but it still happens. If we refuse the mandatory overtime, we're told that our pay will be docked. We lost a lot of employees due to the COVID-19 vaccine mandate, which has only made the problem worse.

It's a major safety issue, even after working just one 16-hour shift, let alone several in a row. Being tired and exhausted is NOT the right mindset to do our job correctly. If a large fight breaks out, we are required to respond immediately, and we aren't mentally prepared because we're so tired. Some staff are using FMLA to avoid mandatory overtime because of the stress, but that also means that fewer of us are available to work the required shifts.

I feel like my employer doesn't care about our families at home waiting for us. When we're hired, we're told family comes first, but we can't actually put them first. I've missed so many events with my kids due to mandatory overtime.

I separated from a 22-year relationship because of my unpredictable schedule and never being home. I've tried to schedule counseling sessions but because I'm always working, I couldn't make it to them. I've been to doctors for stress and depression a few times, and I'm now taking medication to try to help, but the last 3 years of mandatory overtime have been hell.

We need help. We have to hire more people so that we can do our jobs safely. We need the money to hire more people so that the rest of us can take care of ourselves.

Amanda Litzsinger

Eastern Oregon Correctional Inst.