

Dear Chairs Sollman and Evans, and members of the committee,

I have been a Department of Corrections employee for the past 23 years, and I currently work at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility.

When I first started this job, officers could go 6 months to a year before they would have to work a mandatory overtime shift. Now, our staff are mandated twice a week, every single week. And it's important to understand that a mandatory shift is 16 hours, and that we don't know when these shifts are going to be forced on us.

We have a staffing crisis at our facility. Almost half of our staff have less than three years experience. We can't keep employees because in the Metro Area, people can make more money and have predictable hours without mandatory overtime. We don't have emergency responders, we have posts that have been vacant for years. We have graveyard shifts that are being staffed with only one person, all of this is incredibly dangerous for our staff and for the people housed in the facility.

I have older children, so I tend to volunteer for overtime more frequently so that my colleagues with younger families can get mandated less often, but I still get forced to work mandatory overtime. In the month of November, I volunteered for 98 hours of overtime, only to still be told that I was going to have to stay for extra shifts. My 98 hours wasn't enough to cover the staff shortages. It's gotten out of control.

We need help. We need relief. We have ten years of data that show we have been understaffed for all that time, and we need things to change.

Tom Donaldson

Coffee Creek Correctional Facility