

April 25, 2025

Sen. Kate Lieber, Cochair
Rep. Tawna Sanchez, Cochair
Joint Committee on Ways and Means

RE: Support HB 3363

Cochairs Lieber and Sanchez, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means

Good evening, committee, my name is Jared Adams. I work for ODOC at Two Rivers Correctional Institution. I'm here tonight in support of SHB 3363 and the PERS overtime cap fix for Tier Three (OPSRP) employees in the system like me.

At Two Rivers Correctional Institution has had at least 12 staff from day shift working late doing either 12-hour shifts or full double shifts, which are 16 hours. In our contract, it states we may be held over after our shift for occasional overtime. At least once or twice a week does not fit the definition of "occasional". The dictionary definition from Oxford Languages is "Occasional: occurring, appearing, or done infrequently and irregularly."

The jobs are hard. We are proud to do them, but we need your help. We need the quality of the job to increase so that we ODOC can recruit more people to help us. We also need to be compensated for the thousands of hours of overtime by connecting our PERS benefit to more than 300 hours of each calendar year we work. Switching to 12-hour shifts would allow staff to have three- and four-day weekend and still allow us to use trades on our day off and enhance emergency management during night shifts.

Here is an excerpt of an ODOC memo to give you more details of what happens to us in these jobs. The negative health effects of working 16-hour shifts can lead to a range of negative health effects including extreme fatigue, increased risk of accidents, disrupted sleep cycles, cardiovascular issues, digestive problems, mental health concerns like depression and anxiety, increased stress levels, potential for burnout, social isolation, and a higher risk of developing chronic diseases like diabetes and obesity due to disrupted circadian rhythms.

Sleep deprivation:

The most immediate effect is severe fatigue due to inadequate sleep, leading to impaired cognitive function and reaction time.

Disrupted circadian rhythm:

Working long hours, particularly night shifts, disrupts the body's natural sleep-wake cycle, impacting hormone production and metabolism.

Increased stress levels:

The pressure of long shifts can lead to chronic stress, impacting both physical and mental health.

Cardiovascular risks:

Studies link shift work, especially long hours, to an increased risk of cardiovascular diseases like hypertension.

Gastrointestinal issues:

Irregular eating patterns and stress from long shifts can contribute to digestive problems like ulcers and acid reflux.

Mental health impacts:

Shift work can lead to increased symptoms of depression, anxiety, and irritability due to sleep disturbances and stress.

Social isolation:

Working long hours can make it difficult to maintain social connections and family life, leading to feelings of isolation.

Work-related errors:

Fatigue from extended shifts can increase the likelihood of workplace accidents and errors.

I also ask you, how often do officers fall asleep on their way home?

According to the researchers, excessive sleepiness is common among police officers, whether they have sleep disorders or not. In fact, almost half of all participants (45.9 percent) reported having fallen asleep while driving. 1 in 4 report falling asleep while driving at least once a month.

The state of Oregon is knowingly and willingly causing bodily harm to its employees. By continuing to engage in the practice of mandating, we work these double shifts.

Just three-day weekends offer numerous health benefits, including improved mental and physical well-being, better sleep, and reduced stress, allowing for more time for relaxation, exercise, and social activities.

Here's a more detailed breakdown of what we are given as references to guide our life choices, but when you are regularly mandated to work overtime, we cannot make these life sustaining choices. We all want to have better sleep and more of it. We all want to have more activity and spend more time with friends and family. But this is not an option when you are constantly mandated.

Reduced Stress and Burnout:

Longer weekends provide ample time to disconnect from work, relax, and recharge, which can lead to lower stress levels and reduced risk of burnout.

Improved Sleep:

A longer weekend allows for more time to catch up on lost sleep and establish a more regular sleep schedule, which is crucial for overall health.

Increased Physical Activity:

With more free time, individuals can engage in more physical activities, such as exercise, sports, or hobbies, which are beneficial for both physical and mental health.

Better Work-Life Balance:

Three-day weekends can help individuals find a better balance between work and personal life, allowing them to pursue hobbies, spend time with loved ones, and engage in activities that promote well-being.

Improved Mental Health:

Spending time on activities that bring pleasure, engaging in social activities, and disconnecting from work can positively impact mental health and reduce feelings of anxiety and depression.

Social Interaction:

Three-day weekends provide more opportunities for social interaction with friends and family, which can boost mood and reduce feelings of loneliness.

Increased Productivity:

When people are less stressed and have a better work-life balance, they tend to be more productive at work.

Healthier Lifestyle Choices:

More time for healthy activities, such as cooking at home and preparing healthy meals, can lead to better dietary habits and overall health.

The commonalities have been highlighted below

Correctional officers face high rates of stress, burnout, and mental health issues, including PTSD and depression, alongside physical health problems like heart disease and high blood pressure, often leading to a shorter lifespan.

Here's a more detailed breakdown of common health issues for correctional officers,

Mental Health Issues:

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD):

Exposure to traumatic events in the workplace, such as violence or witnessing suffering, can lead to PTSD.

Depression and Anxiety:

The stressful nature of the job, long shifts, and potential for exposure to violence contribute to higher rates of depression and anxiety.

Burnout:

The constant pressure and emotional toll of the job can lead to burnout, characterized by exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced job satisfaction.

Suicide:

Studies show that correctional officers have a higher suicide rate than the general population.

Substance Use Disorders:

Stress and trauma can lead to substance abuse or dependence.

Physical Health Issues:

Heart Disease and High Blood Pressure:

The constant stress and "fight or flight" response can lead to elevated blood pressure and an increased risk of heart disease.

Strains, Sprains, and Other Injuries:

Correctional officers are at risk for injuries from workplace violence, slips, trips, falls, and responding to emergencies.

Infectious Diseases:

Exposure to infectious diseases, such as HIV, Hepatitis, and TB, is a potential risk due to the nature of the work environment.

Ulcers:

Chronic stress can contribute to the development of ulcers.

Reduced Life Expectancy:

The combination of mental and physical health issues can contribute to a shorter lifespan for correctional officers.

Workplace Violence:

Correctional officers face a high risk of workplace violence, which can lead to physical and psychological harm.

Other Factors Contributing to Health Issues:

Long and Irregular Hours:

Long shifts and irregular schedules can disrupt sleep patterns and contribute to stress.

Lack of Support:

Stigma surrounding mental health issues and lack of access to resources can hinder officers from seeking help.

Public Perception:

Negative perceptions of correctional officers in the public and media can add to the stress and strain.

Staffing Shortages:

Overtime and staffing shortages can exacerbate stress and strain.

Emotional Labor:

The emotional toll of interacting with incarcerated individuals and dealing with difficult situations can take a toll on officers' mental and emotional well-being.

Thank you for your consideration. Please support HB 3363.

Jared Adams
Oregon AFSCME