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Good Evening, Chairman Harp, Chairman Merrill and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Brian Anderson and I am a lobbyist for Council 4 AFSCME, a union of 35,000 public employee and nonprofit members - 4,000 of whom are Correction Officers and employees.

I am testifying as to the need for additional staff at DOC. Two years ago, the State Legislature's Program Review Committee found that DOC suffers from a 20% staff shortage. They found that correction institutions are undermanned by about 700 officers.

This shortage makes conditions unsafe for inmates, staff and the public. It also drives overtime costs, and has resulted in staff injuries that add to Workers' Compensation costs.

We urge the Appropriations Committee to begin closing this shortage and to hire enough officers to properly man the State's Correction system. We also urge the Committee to begin to prepare for the large number of Correction Officer retirements that are expected to occur in the next few years.

We request that the Legislature investigate the Department's recent ratcheting down of the "shift relief factor." This factor is a formula designed by the National Correction Institute for manning posts in Correction facilities. DOC recently reduced the "SRF" from the number 2.2 own to 1.6. Incidentally, that has the result of making Program Reviews staff shortage findings disappear—at least on paper.

Commissioner Lantz just testified that the Department saved one million dollars in overtime costs last year. In part this was due to the Union's request that the Department's management and insurance carrier meet to discuss compensation issues every two weeks. Though we are still troubled by the automatic denial of work related injuries by the G.A.B. Robbins Corporation, which even denied the claim of an officer who was nearly

slashed to death while protecting an inmate from attack by another inmate in a correction facility.