

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF STATE
COUNTY MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES



2008 REPORT TO THE
JOINT HOUSE / SENATE
CRIMINAL JUSTICE INTERIM COMMITTEE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

AFSCME Local 3807 would like to thank the Texas Department of Criminal Justice Executive Services for assisting with portions of the data for this report and their forthcoming of information. Furthermore we would like to thank the members of the Texas Senate / Legislator for taking the time for their important public service.

The American Federation of State County Municipal Employees Local 3807 has conducted a study of correctional officer shortages and vacancies in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, ending in the month of May 31, 2008. Results of our study found the following:

- The Texas Department of Criminal Justice is currently authorized to have **26,308** fulltime officers. As of May 31, 2008 the agency had **21,921** fulltime officers on the units. This leaves a balance of **4,387** fulltime correctional officer positions not staffed on the prison units.
- The Texas Department of Criminal Justice at the end of May 31, 2008 had **2,042** correctional officers on FMLA / non-FMLA leave status. **735** correctional officers were on *leave without pay* (LWOP) and not included in the **21,921** fulltime positions filled.
- As of May 31, 2008 **1,307** correctional officers were out on FMLA / Non-FMLA leave status still on the payroll, this left TDCJ Prison Units understaffed by a total of **5,694** fulltime correctional officers.
- As of May 31, 2008 the Texas Department of Criminal Justice had **539** part time correctional officer positions and **689.5** correctional officers in TDCJ academies.
- As of May 31, 2008 with part time correctional positions being counted towards fulltime positions and the **1,307** officers on leave status, this leaves TDCJ with a balance of **5,424.5** fulltime correctional officer positions not on TDCJ prison units.
- Conclusion of our research shows that **5,424.5** fulltime positions are not being staffed on TDCJ prison units as of May 31, 2008.

Possible results of declining TDCJ Professional Correctional Officers:

- Violent serious assaults have increased **52%** between 2001 and 2007 among offenders. (based on ratios per 10,000 offenders)
- Violent serious assaults have increased **19 %** on staff members between 2001 and 2007. (based on ratios per 10,000 offenders)
- A July 2005 Federal study done by the US Bureau of Justice Statistics on the **2003 Prison Rape Elimination Act** found that Texas led the nation in the number of prison rapes with **550** rapes out of a total of **1,229** for all states.
- Reduced screening and quality control in the correctional officer hiring process. Between 2000 and 2006 employee arrest increased **26%**. (based on staff ratios per 10,000 offenders)
- Offender suicides increased **82%** between 2003 and 2007. (based on ratios per 10,000 offenders)
- Offender escapes by person increased **300%** between 2001 and 2007. (based on ratios per 10,000 offenders)
- Between 2002 and 2007 offender accidental deaths increased **300%**. (based on ratios per 10,000 offenders)
- Between 2001 and 2007 the total Emergency Action Incidents reported increased **45%**. (based on ratios per 10,000 offenders)

2008 PAY STUDY

TURN OVER RATE CHART / PAY / EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATION NEGOTIATIONS STATE BY STATE COMPARISON

Top 10 STATES (by population rank)	ANNUAL CO TURNOVER	EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATION NEGOTIATIONS	STARTING CO SALARY	MAXIMUM CO SALARY	STATE RANK IN PAY
1. TEXAS	24 %	NO	\$26,016	\$34,624	48 TH
2. California	6.5%	Yes	\$46,939	\$73,728	2 nd
3. New York	4.3 %	YES	\$39,358	\$58,076	6 TH
4. Florida	13.0 %	YES	\$28,007	\$45,033	21 ST
5. Illinois	4.4 %	YES	\$35,868	\$45,884	16 TH
6. Pennsylvania	5.5 %	YES	\$37,980	\$65,158	3 RD
7. Ohio	< 10 %*	YES	\$34,008	\$41,350	35 TH
8. Michigan	4.2 %	YES	\$31,678	\$48,526	20 TH
9. Georgia	23.0 %	NO	\$24,322	\$42,643	25 TH
10. N. Carolina	13.0 %	NO	\$26,209	\$42,410	40 TH

The US Bureau of Labor Statistics Data on Salaries for Correctional Officers

Correctional officer employment is expected to grow 16 percent between 2006 and 2016. Growth in the correctional profession is faster than other average occupational growth. Increasing demand for correctional officers will stem from population growth and rising rates of incarceration. Mandatory (3G) sentencing guidelines calling for longer sentences and reduced parole opportunities for offenders are the primary reason for historically increasing incarceration rates.

According to the US Bureau of Labor the middle 50 percent of correctional officers earned between **\$38,920** and **\$67,820**. The lowest 10 percent earned less than **\$34,624**, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$81,230. Median annual earnings for state correctional officers is **\$51,500** and **\$52,940** for local jurisdictions. Fulltime Texas Correctional Officers with 8 years of employment barely earn more than the lowest 10 percent of correctional officers nationwide.

Source: "Correctional Officers." U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics.
<<http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos156.htm>>

CONCLUSION OF STUDY

The Texas Legislator, Texas Board of Criminal Justice, and the Governor's Office should act on reducing major problems occurring with the Texas Prison System. Professional staffing of the prison system should be the greatest priority.

The direction the State of Texas has taken by not professionalizing Texas correctional officers is having a major impact on the day to day operations of the prison system. Texas prisons have experienced an increase in violence, gang tensions with the immergence of "Tango" gangs, major security threat groups, and increased major psychological problems with increasing rates of inmate suicides. Prisons are now the new frontier on the war on terrorism, with radical groups looking to recruit domestic terrorist.

Texas should follow the steps other states have taken by treating their correctional officers as a professional law enforcement positions. The jobs these officers do is far too important to down play their role in reducing recidivism, prison violence, securing our communities, and mentoring the offender population. Correctional officers are the backbone of our correctional institutions and law enforcement. Corrections is a business that often requires intense interactive people skills and frequent interactions with a diverse offender population. Correctional officers must master communication skills unlike any other profession.

Proper management of correctional institutions will assist in improving recidivism. By placing inmates in harm's way, we are only encouraging the emergence of organized crime with prison protection gangs, and other illegal security threat organizations having a greater influence on the inmate populations.

Violent stress factors play an important role in prison society. By continuing to ignore these problems, the State of Texas will increase their liability from lawsuits and the risk of costly Federal oversight. The cost inflicted on society will be the greatest disaster, as the violent psychological scars are inflicted on over 1 million Texans who recidivate in and out of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. Even worse are the scars inflicted on Texas correctional staff and families who are the innocent victims of the state's deliberate indifference.