
Government of the District of Columbia



Department of Corrections

Testimony of
Devon Brown
Director

*“Bill 17-59, “The Corrections Officer’s
Easy-Out Retirement Act of 2007”*

The Committee on Workforce Development
and Government Operations
Carol Schwartz, Chair
Council of the District of Columbia

JULY 6, 2007

Room 412
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004
4:00 P.M.

Good Afternoon, Chairwoman Schwartz, and members of the Committee on Workforce Development and Government Operations. I am Devon Brown, Director of the DC Department of Corrections.

I appear before you today in strong support of Bill 17-59, “The Corrections Officer’s Easy-Out Act of 2007,” as this legislation will do much to advance the vision of the Department of Corrections and prepare the agency to better meet its current and future demands.

As you know, the correctional officer is a vital member of the District’s workforce. Currently, there are 696 authorized front line and supervisory correctional officer positions for the Department of Corrections. Regarded as the nucleus of the correctional environment as it relates to the provision of order, safety, and security for staff, visitors and inmates, this cadre of uniformed men and women undoubtedly carry a wealth of responsibility as an official in the public safety community. It is imperative, therefore, that these individuals are competent in all areas to perform in an environment largely comprised of inmate impulsivity, hyper-masculinity, and virility.

The Department of Corrections, however, is comprised of an aging workforce with the security staff averaging 50 years old. For many of these individuals, their health has been affected by the natural aging process, yet they respond to the daily challenges of supervising an inmate population that is on average, 15 years younger (with an increasing number of juveniles entering the system). In the most grave of circumstances, and a heartfelt misfortune experienced by the Department this year, is when a correctional

officer within this age bracket dies on duty. Workforce replacement has become increasingly essential in order to further promote a safe environment.

Passage of Bill 17-59 greatly supports this endeavor, as it is intended to provide a reasonable incentive to encourage retirement eligible correctional officers to pursue this path. Ultimately, public safety and the Department of Corrections are best served through this plan as it stands to generate salary savings as well as increased productivity and quality of performance gains. Moreover, this initiative serves as the cornerstone of the Department of Corrections' efforts to reengineer its business practices and establish a more constructive, efficient operation that sets a standard of proficiency and excellence within the profession and the District government.

Chairwoman Schwartz, this concludes my testimony. I would be pleased to respond to any questions that you may have of me at this time.

Thank you.

###