
Government of the District of Columbia



Department of Corrections

Testimony of
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Director

***“Department of Corrections Budget Oversight
Hearing FY 2008”***

Committee on Public Safety and the Judiciary
Phil Mendelson, Chair
Council of the District of Columbia

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Room 412
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004
10 A.M.

Good Morning, Chairman Mendelson and Members of the Committee on Public Safety and the Judiciary.

I am Devon Brown, Director of the D.C. Department of Corrections. I appear before you today to present the D.C. Department of Corrections' (DOC) budget request for fiscal year 2008 (FY 2008).

Accompanying me are Patricia Britton, Deputy Director and Ronald Peele, Agency Fiscal Officer.

As you well know, there is a major quest within the Department of Corrections to establish a municipal detention center that is second to none. In so doing, we seek to expand inmate educational and recreational programs, coordinate community resources, and improve release processing for inmates. Maintaining an orderly, safe, and secure environment for visitors, staff, and inmates is our primary objective, of which sufficient funding is a critical component. The Department commends you, Chairman Mendelson, and the entire Committee on the support you have provided in our overall public safety endeavors.

The Department of Corrections takes seriously its responsibility for ensuring sound, fiscal management practices. Our FY 2008 proposed budget is consistent with Mayor Fenty's newly established budget system designed to increase efficiency and accountability throughout District government. Under this system, all agencies will assume individual responsibility for cost for services previously provided by the Office of Contracts and Procurement (OCP) and the Department of Human Resources (DHR).

The Department of Corrections will be assessed based on its amount of procurement activity related to supplies, contracts, and capital projects. However, activities related to subsidies and transfers, including grants, are excluded from the calculation of the assessment. The final assessments will be discounted based on the agency's demonstrated ability to exercise greater authority.

The Department's human resources assessment will be based on the number of full time employees (FTEs) proposed for FY 2008.

With the assistance of the Office of the City Administrator, the Department of Corrections has assessed the costs of procurement services at \$655,819, and for human resources, \$802,495.

The Department of Corrections FY 2008 proposed operating budget is \$153,868,436 (\$154 million). This budget request supports 945 FTEs, which represents an additional 22 FTEs or a 2.7% increase over FY 2007.

Our proposed budget is distributed among the following program areas:

- Inmate Custody – 52.57%;
- Inmate Services – 28.51%;
- Agency Management – 13.10%;
- Institutional Support – 5.4%; and
- Agency Financial Operations - .42% of the overall budget.

The FY 2008 proposed operating budget for the Department of Corrections represents an increase of \$16,278,290 or an 11.8% increase over the FY 2007 approved budget. The increase results from the FY 2008 program enhancements included in this budget request.

Language has been inserted into the District's FY 2008 proposed budget that would provide \$18.7 million for the Department of Corrections' requested Program Enhancements. These enhancements include:

- \$2.8 million for Agency Recruitment

The Department is mandated by law to provide safe and secure housing for individuals committed to its custody. This responsibility cannot effectively be met without adequate security staff. In FY 2005, DOC identified recruitment as a strategic issue as 50% of the correctional workforce was eligible for voluntary retirement on October 1, 2006. Therefore, it is imperative that the agency establish a recruitment program to attract, train, and retain qualified and talented individuals to execute the high expectation of service delivery required by the Department and District residents.

- \$2.6 million for Contractual Maintenance at the Central Detention Facility

Several factors are converging which greatly increase the challenge of maintaining the Central Detention Facility (CDF). First, the CDF is old (30 years) by contemporary standards. It operates at close to full

capacity, with a very heavy volume of inmate movement in, out, and through the facility seven days a week, 52 weeks a year. Inmates frequently vent anger and frustration by inflicting property damage resulting in extraordinary levels of wear and tear to sanitation and hygiene systems. The age of the facility also increases the unpredictability with which any of these systems will break down and require emergency maintenance. To address this situation, DOC proposes to contract all maintenance of the Central Detention Facility to an outside vendor, and eliminate all in-house maintenance.

- \$3 million to Establish a Correctional Surveillance Center

A correctional surveillance center established at the DC Jail would provide 24-hour monitoring of various events in the jail via the Department's closed circuit TV network, inmate telephone system, facial recognition program, and planned radio frequency identification inmate tracking system. The data and intelligence generated by these technologies will track inmate and staff movements, and extend our capacity to increase safety as well as promote significant reductions in assaults, escape attempts and other incidents that threaten the order, safety, and security of the facility.

- 8.5 million for Contractual Escalators

Allows the Department to more effectively address its correctional operational requirements for public safety. This technical adjustment supports on going budget needs required to maintain the service delivery levels of the previous fiscal year at contractually negotiated price increases and includes mandatory services such as contractual housing at the Correctional Treatment Facility (CTF), and four contract halfway houses, inmate health care, food services, technology operations, and associated licensures.

- \$1.8 million to Implement Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) at the Central Detention Facility

The implementation of this initiative will significantly improve order, safety and security within the facility. Installation of the RFID would allow security staff to track inmate movement throughout the facility in real time. This would improve response time to occurrences that threaten the order, safety, and security of the facility. For example, the RFID would allow staff to intervene quickly when assaults occur or appear imminent, and interrupt inmate movement in unauthorized areas. Additionally, the electronic record

generated by the system would prove invaluable in post incident investigations because of the information it captures, including who was present at the scene during the commission of the incident.

In summary, the proposed enhancements serve to strengthen many of the initiatives embarked upon by the Department in the past year. As we proceed in preparing for the next fiscal year, the Department will ensure continued order, safety and security by placing emphasis on critical services and programs that encourage inmates to become more constructively oriented while in custody and prepares them for a successful return to the community. While highlighted in previous testimony, their merits warrant repeating. The most noteworthy include:

- Automatic HIV testing program, which has received national acclaim;
- Educational television viewing program, which has expanded to include enriching playing cards, and organized chess tournaments;
- Expansion of reentry-services;
- Vigorous pursuit of federal reimbursement for felons in DOC custody;
and
- Increasing and strengthening community partnerships.

In closing, the Department of Corrections continues to fervidly work to reshape and align agency goals with the District's determination to provide the highest level of public safety. I embrace the support of the Council and other stakeholders in fulfilling this goal.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify before you today. I would be pleased to answer any questions that you may have.