

**PENNSYLVANIA STATE CORRECTIONS OFFICERS ASSOCIATION
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**PSCOA: CONTINUED DENIAL OF PROBLEMS BY DOC WILL ONLY GET
MORE OFFICERS HURT**

HARRISBURG – Pennsylvania State Corrections Officers Association (PSCOA) President Donald G. McNary today issued the following statements on the Department of Corrections reaction to a recent assault of an officer at SCI-Mahanoy:

On the department's continued denial of understaffing problems:

"The Department of Corrections (DOC) reaction to the latest in a string of brutal assaults on its Officers is disappointing but hardly surprising. The response was all too familiar: Deny a problem exists, and accuse the PSCOA of conducting a scare campaign.

"For years, the department served as the lone voice to the public and media for all news inside our state institutions. Those days are over. The statistics cited by PSCOA on prison population came directly from the department. Unfortunately, as PSCOA brings many of these statistics to light for the first time, the department alters its measurements or removes them from its Web site.

"For instance, up until mid-2004, DOC provided "maximum capacity" numbers on its Web site of each state institution. Using this nationally accepted measurement, two institutions are over 150 percent capacity, another five are above 160, and one – Greensburg is at an astonishing 198, according to the last time this statistic was made available by the department. When PSCOA began disseminating these numbers to the public, the department removed them from the Web site and began using more DOC friendly operational capacity statistics.

"By doing so, the department instantly reduced the statistical average level of overcrowding from 143 percent (maximum capacity) to 113 percent (operational capacity) in 11 institutions. It's important to note in 1989, the prison population at SCI-Camp Hill was at 142 percent maximum capacity when a four-day riot began that cost taxpayers millions.

On assault reporting:

"We also have grave concerns about statistical data on assaults compiled by the department since assault reporting varies from prison to prison. To more accurately gauge assaults, PSCOA has begun compiling its own statistics and documentation to

show the true problem that exists due to the system's overpopulation and understaffing of Officers.

"Yet, despite our documentation, the department has downplayed 15 recent assaults at SCI-Mahanoy. In fact, nearly 40 assaults have been documented by PSCOA statewide since the beginning of 2005. Assaults have also taken place at SCIs Albion, Chester, Dallas, Frackville, Graterford, Greene, Houtzdale, Retreat, Somerset, Rockview, and Warren."

On calling for the resignation of SCI-Mahanoy Superintendent:

"On Monday, PSCOA called for the resignation of SCI-Mahanoy Superintendent Edward Klem after an Officer was seriously injured by an inmate who repeatedly struck him in the head with telephone receiver, garbage can and ping-pong paddle. Despite 15 assaults on Officers at Mahanoy since January 1, Superintendent Klem called the incident "isolated" and refused to lockdown the institution.

"DOC seems to suggest that Superintendent Klem's 33 years on the job justifies no action being taken, despite his poor performance. Time on the job doesn't mean that job is being done well. Whether a person has worked for 33 days or 33 years, they must be held accountable. Officers are being assaulted, some seriously. By doing nothing, DOC is sending a clear message to inmates that seriously injuring an Officer won't lead to widespread corrective action."