

**PENNSYLVANIA STATE CORRECTIONS OFFICERS ASSOCIATION  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**PA STATE CORRECTIONS OFFICERS ASSOCIATION CALLS FOR RESIGNATION  
OF SCI-MAHANAY SUPERINTENDENT**

*Friday assault latest in a string of vicious attacks on Corrections Officers*  
**Volume of assaults increasing statewide due to lack of Officers**

HARRISBURG – Pennsylvania State Corrections Officers Association (PSCOA) President Donald G. McNany today called for the resignation of SCI-Mahanoy Superintendent Edward Klem after a string of vicious attacks on Corrections Officers in recent weeks. PSCOA is also calling for the passage of Senate Bill 362 to enhance safety by requiring the Department of Corrections (DOC) to fill all vacant officer positions.

Last Friday, an Officer with 14 years of experience was seriously injured by an inmate who repeatedly struck him in the head with telephone receiver, garbage can and ping-pong paddle. His injuries were so serious the Officer was taken by helicopter to the Geisinger Medical Center where he received staples to cover three layers of sutures on his head. His right hand is also badly damaged.

Despite 12 assaults on Officers at Mahanoy since January 1, Superintendent Klem called the incident “isolated” and refused to lockdown the institution.

“Superintendent Klem’s failure to act decisively sends a clear message to inmates that seriously injuring an Officer won’t lead to widespread corrective action,” McNany said. “Not only have there been 12 assaults since the beginning of the year, but last year an officer patrolling alone at Mahanoy was stabbed twice in the neck. Clearly, changes must be made to ensure the safety of our Officers. That won’t occur under the current leadership. Superintendent Klem must resign, or DOC should remove him immediately.”

The increasing number of violent assaults isn’t isolated to SCI-Mahanoy. 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.

To help Officers at all institutions better deal with a skyrocketing prison population, McNany is also calling for the Pennsylvania General Assembly to pass Senate Bill 362, which would compel the Department to fill all authorized officer positions. Funding has been provided for these positions in the current state budget.

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This past year, as many as 200 positions have gone unfilled by the department in what can only be categorized as a cost-saving measure. Senate Bill 362 doesn't create one new job, but merely requires that all positions funded in the budget be filled.

Overcrowding and understaffing are worse than official data show. DOC argues improvements made at some institutions have enabled the increase in capacity, but it didn't proportionally increase the number of Corrections Officers. According to department statistics, from 2001 through mid-2004, the number of prisoners increased from 32,173 to 40,697 (more than 26 percent), while the number of Corrections Officers increased from 7,045 to 7,551 (just 7 percent).

Today, seven institutions are at a higher capacity rate than SCI-Camp Hill was 15 years ago when a four-day riot left a trail of devastation. Overpopulation and understaffing were cited as two key reasons for that riot. Today, we are witnessing those same problems.

"In my 13 years as a Corrections Officer, I have never seen so many vicious attacks on Officers," McNary said. "If the Department won't put the safety of our Officers as a top priority, our state lawmakers must step in. If it's one thing that inmates understand, it's a numbers advantage. Something must be done before an Officer is killed."

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