



## PENNSYLVANIA STATE CORRECTIONS OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

2421 North Front Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17110-1110  
(717) 364-1700 Phone  
(717) 364-1705 Fax  
*Patrolling the Toughest Blocks in the State*  
WWW.PSCOA.ORG

*Larry Blackwell, President*  
lblackwell@pscoa.org

*Hank McNair, Executive Vice President*  
hmcnair@pscoa.org

*John Eckenrode, Vice President*  
jeckenrode@pscoa.org

*Mark Truskowski, Vice President*  
mtruskowski@pscoa.org

*Raymond Johnston, Secretary/Treasurer*  
rjohnston@pscoa.org

### **Main Office Update (For September)**

Once again it is time to let the members know of the progress and doings at the Main Office.

### **Legislative Update**

-The SCI Retreat public hearing is scheduled for 10/17/19 in the auditorium of the Nanticoke high school. All H-1 members are encouraged to attend.

-Members of SCI Greene, and SCI Fayette Ken Elstner, Rob Hendrix, Larry Blackwell, John Eckenrode, Jack Mottin and Mike Ohler attended the Washington County Democratic Dinner. This dinner was held to honor Representative Pam Snyder. Representative Snyder sponsored the bill that allows H-1 members to carry OC. Representative Snyder (D) maintains a very productive relationship with the PSCOA. She has introduced several bills concerning staff safety that we hope will be voted on in November.

-In the previous letter, we talked about seeking help from Pat Toomey's (R) office in an attempt to get Pennsylvania Corrections included in the tax exemption that other law enforcement agencies get when retiring before age 55. Senator Toomey's office reached out to us this week and informed us that he will be drafting language this coming week to include us in the tax exemption.

-Congressman Connor Lamb (D) was in attendance at the Washington County dinner that we attended. We had a chance to speak with him about the upcoming Toomey legislation and Congressman Lamb has pledged his support to the bill.

-Larry Blackwell met with State Auditor Eugene DePasquale. Topics of discussion included, HB 46 (no CO left behind) Staffing issues (most level three institutions have

more level four inmates than level four institutions) and Control Bubbles being left unmanned.

-Larry Blackwell also met with Senator Lisa Baker. The main topic of discussion was the parole report.

### **Upcoming**

-Tomorrow 10/16, John Eckenrode and members of the SCI Pine Grove local and a retiree from Torrance will meet with Representative Jim Struzzi. We will be talking about procedures at Torrance State Hospital, misconducts, Hearing Examiner problems, Restricted Housing Unit, staff assaults, prosecution of inmates found guilty of staff assaults, the incentive programs that are being implemented in our institutions and we will ask Representative Struzzi to support upcoming legislation such as HB 44, 45, 46, 256, 257, and 1850. We will also be asking that he not support HB 497 that puts severe restrictions on housing in the Restricted Housing Unit.

- Larry Blackwell will be giving testimony before the House Judiciary Committee on October 21<sup>st</sup>. He will speak on the Department cutting corners to save money, violence against staff members, and he will offer suggestions to remedy the parole system.

-Last but not least for the Legislative update. On October 29<sup>th</sup>, we will be attending a meeting with every Senator with an SCI in their district. This is a great opportunity for the PSCOA to touch base with Senators with a vested interest in the Department of Corrections. We will keep you posted.

### **Tours of Institutions**

-Hank McNair and Mark Truskowski attended the SCI Dallas General Membership Meeting. They also did a tour of SCI Retreat and participated in their Local Labor Management Meeting.

-John Eckenrode toured SCI Forest and participated in their Labor Management meeting dealing with management's proposal to partially close their observation towers.

-John Eckenrode and Larry Blackwell attended the SCI Huntingdon General Membership Meeting.

### **Contract**

- As stated in the previous letter, we have had several internal contract meetings with our law firm. 9/11/19 we had our first mediation session with the Commonwealth. As expected the mediation meeting was less than fruitful. The PSCOA presented items for discussion a week in advance. We asked the Commonwealth to do the same. The Commonwealth presented their items the day of the meeting. Needless to say, most of the Commonwealths

items were give backs by the PSCOA. We have our second mediation scheduled for 10/28/19.

-We finally received the information needed to shop for another administrator of benefits. (PEBTF) The PEBTF was very reluctant to provide us with the information necessary to investigate whether it would be beneficial for us to attempt to remove ourselves. We now have the information and have provided it to the company that is investigating this for us.

-We met with an economic expert. He gave a presentation on the current Pennsylvania economy. After some debate and an Executive Board vote. We will be retaining his services for the upcoming contract.

-We also met with a Psychology expert, with the vote of the Executive board, she will also be testifying for our contract.

### **Arbitration / ULP**

-We heard three arbitrations in September and have four more scheduled for the month of October.

- We have one Unfair Labor Practice charge to be heard in the month of October.

### **Miscellaneous**

-We conducted a Business Agent training for all BA's at the main office.

-We conducted a local training at SCI Somerset for Local Officers. New officers will be elected in the coming months. When the election process is over, more local training will be conducted.

-We had our first ever Staff Wellness Committee meeting.

-The Finance Committee will be coming to the Main office in November to review spending.

Please stay safe and watch each other's back.

Team PSCOA