



Teamsters 10-8

The Newsletter for FDOC Correctional, Parole and Probation Officers

— DISPATCHES FROM THE CAPITOL — Wed. Feb. 22, 2012

FDOC OFFICERS KEEP UP THE CLOSURE FIGHT

The FDOC will be sending reassignment notices in the coming days to officers working at the correctional facilities and work camps that are scheduled to close, but officers are urged to continue to speak out against the planned closures.

Impacted officers have filled out reassignment-request forms where they ranked preferences for institutions to which they will accept reassignment. Next, the state will send out the notices reassigning the officers in seniority order to facilities that they chose as long as there are vacancies. The state said the notices will be sent out by Friday, Feb. 24.

"While it appears the state appears to be moving forward with the closures and we face an uphill battle, we need to do whatever we can to try to keep them open for as long as possible so officers and their families are not uprooted," said Ken Wood, Acting President of Teamsters Local 2011. "It's not over until it's over. We are urging officers who have not gotten involved yet to do so now."

Because getting the closure story in the media is so important and effective, Local 2011 is developing a model "Letter to the Editor" that officers can sign on to and deliver to their local newspapers.

In addition, Local 2011 is putting together letters addressed to Gov. Rick Scott and FDOC Secretary Kenneth S. Tucker that officers will be able to send. These letters will be available soon.

"All officers need to get involved in this closure issue," said Sgt. Steve Rich, from Indian River C.I. "If we fight together, we will have a stronger impact in the decision-making process."

Officers are also urged to continue working with their county commissioners to win support against the closures, as well as their state legislators. One way to

do this is for officers to join the Teamsters Legislative Action Committees at your facilities. These committees are for officers interested in being engaged and active on the legislative issues that impact our jobs. Go here to sign up: <http://fdocteamsters.org/join-your-legislative-actioncommittee>

Over the past few months, officers in counties throughout the state, including Indian River, Hillsborough and Jefferson, attended county board meetings. Officers have brought attention to the devastating impact the closures would have on officer jobs and communities. In response to the officers' efforts, the County Boards of Commissioners in Indian River, Hillsborough and Jefferson all overwhelmingly adopted resolutions opposing the respective closures, and other resolutions are being considered.

The proposed closures would impact New River Correctional in Raiford, Demilly Correctional Institute in Polk City, Gainesville C.I., Indian River C.I. in Vero Beach, and the women's prisons Broward C.I. in Fort Lauderdale and Hillsborough C.I. in Riverview near Tampa. The department also plans to close work camps in Gadsden, Washington and Hendry counties and the Levy forestry camp. Through the efforts of FDOC officers and other supporters, it appears that Jefferson CI has avoided closure at this time.

Pension Battles

In other news, Local 2011 has been successful fighting to protect officers' retirement security. A state Senate committee was scheduled to vote today to cut into our FRS benefits again. But thanks to the efforts of Local 2011 and our other labor allies, we were successful in postponing the vote—the committee chair listened to us and agreed to "temporarily postpone" the bill.

In related pension news, Judge Jackie Fulford is expected to issue her ruling in the FRS case this week. Although a hearing has been postponed for Friday, the ruling is still expected to occur. This involves a lawsuit filed by the Teamsters and other unions challenging the state's decision to force officers to begin contributing 3 percent of their pay to be part of the Florida Retirement System. Stay tuned for the most current news on the FRS lawsuit.

Privatization Ploy?

Public-private partnerships—window dressing for blanket privatization?

The Teamster lobbyists and staff have been on the lookout for any bills that may sneak in prison privatization. One such bill has been quietly moving through the Legislature. HB 337 (and the senate companion bill SB576) looks on the surface to be a "bricks and mortar" bill focused on infrastructure. But this bill includes dangerous language that could allow for mass privatization of the operation of all the state's prisons. Your Teamster legislative staff informed our allies in the House about the hidden agenda behind this bill and succeeded in bringing it to light in the House Government Operations Appropriations subcommittee on Tuesday, Feb. 21.

State Rep. Joe Gibbons and Rep. Gwen Clark-Reed specifically brought up their concerns about prison privatization under this bill. While the sponsor assured that this bill would not allow for that, it was the consensus of the committee to fix the bill so the state's public prisons would be protected.

Do you want to help the cause? Contact your legislators and tell them not to be fooled by these bills as written. They put our public prisons in jeopardy.