



PENNSYLVANIA STATE CORRECTIONS OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

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... *Patrolling the Toughest Blocks in the State* ...

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**Date:** June 4, 2013

**To:** Joint Hearing House and Senate Labor and Industry Committees

**From:** Jason C. Bloom, PCSOA Vice President

**RE:** CO Bill of Rights

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My name is Jason Bloom, Vice President of Pennsylvania State Corrections Officers Association; representing the interest of over 12,000 professional Corrections Officers working in 29 facilities throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. On behalf of the members of the PCSOA I welcome the opportunity to appear in front of you today to urge your support in the passing of this important piece of legislation.

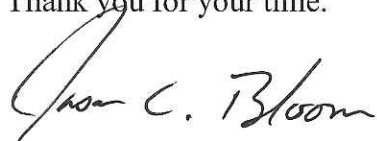
During my term of office I have unfortunately had to deal with situations in which members of the Union and their families suffered terrible financial and emotional harm; that the passing of this legislation would have avoided. The life of a Corrections Officer is a difficult one. We are entrusted with the care, custody and control of vicious criminals and for some reason the Department of Corrections has shown its self-willingness to accept the word of inmates over the word of a professional Corrections Officer. The Department of Corrections upon receiving an allegation from an inmate will suspend the Officer with no pay or benefits for himself or his family. This suspension takes place prior to an investigation taking place or even worse without the Corrections Officer knowing what he is accused of.

This may sound terrible to you but it gets worse; there is no time limit for the Department of Corrections to even complete an investigation of charges. We have had situations where a member has waited 60 days to 2 years without even knowing what they are accused of. As a result of the

long and torturous process, members have willingly accepted unwarranted suspensions to get back to gathering a paycheck and to have their lives return to normalcy. The actions of the Department of Corrections have caused a chilling effect on Corrections Officers throughout the Commonwealth when they know that the word of a convicted felon could result in the destruction of their career.

Without this piece of legislation any officer that has been put in this situation and then returns to work inside the institutional walls could then find themselves in a position to be more of a "spectator" of what happens as opposed to one that is enforcing the rules for fear that the inmate could file false accusations against them. This has a chilling effect on other Corrections Officers who fear that they could find themselves in the same situation. This isn't what we want for a workforce that has care, custody, and control over convicted felons. We as a Union aren't looking to protect the guilty; just the opposite, to protect the innocent.

Thank you for your time.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason C. Bloom". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Jason C. Bloom