



KING COUNTY CORRECTIONS GUILD

September 7, 2018

TO: Executive Dow Constantine
cc: King County Councilmembers

FM: David Richardson, President

RE: Update on Mandatory Overtime and Jail Population

Mandatory overtime continues to be at crisis level in our jails. As has been communicated to senior members within our department, **if something meaningful isn't done to relieve this situation soon, our workforce is going to start to break.**

Last Thursday, August 30th - 15 officers from third shift at KCJ, every last officer that was available to do so, was forced to work mandatory overtime. Several of the 15 officers were mandatoried for the 4th day in a row that week, the most possible, and a few of those were mandatoried 10 times in the month of August! It is likely that these same junior officers will continue to be mandatoried in this pattern for weeks to come. These forced 16-hour shifts take a toll on these individual's health, and everyone's safety and wellbeing. How long can we expect these individuals to sustain these demanding schedules? How long will we be forcing them to work these hours without adequate rest, then expecting them to drive themselves home safely? This is becoming common place and is entirely unacceptable to us, and should be entirely unacceptable to you!

In addition, you need to be aware of the very serious situation that is developing regarding our inmate population. **The high population levels, combined with the very high number of psych inmates, is threatening to overwhelm our systems, and put us in violation of the limits imposed by the Hammer litigation.**

- It has become common practice that inmates classified as psych by medical staff are 'cleared', we believe prematurely, and placed back into the general population to make room for psych inmates with even more acute needs.

- There was recently a very serious assault between cellmates at the KCJ involving life threatening injuries. Both the victim and assailant have extensive psych housing and restrictive housing histories. **They were both 'cleared' for general population housing to make room for other priorities.**
- Last Thursday the 9 South housing unit at KCJ was at 158 inmates, with 10 more ready to come up from booking. The Hammer limit is 160. Again, operating at or above the Hammer limits is becoming more and more common.

We have heard that there are discussions regarding repurposing the west wing of KCJ for non-corrections purposes. **We think that would be a serious mistake.** We need more space in our facilities for our inmates, as I mentioned to Councilmembers Balducci and Upthegrove during our most recent meeting. **We think you should authorize the repairs to the west wing so we can put inmates back in those housing areas.** Please get back to us and let us know what you intend to do with this space.

For years the county has avoided dealing with the need for more jail beds and more staffing. There are no quick or easy fixes, but you need to be aware of how serious the situation has become. We stand ready to work with you to address this situation. We believe all options, including reopening the west wing of KCJ, needs to be on the table.