

Good Morning

My name is Garry Miklinski, the reason I am testifying here today is, I was raised and I have raised my children, to tell the truth, be honest, treat others with respect and not to lie. When I initially heard about the closing of the state correctional institutions at Greensburg and Cresson I was in shock. The announcement from secretary Wetzel was that the prisons were being closed because of the condition and age of the facilities. (I am a corrections officer who has worked at SCI Cresson for 21 years and I have seen many improvements at SCI Cresson. Something just didn't sound right about this.) Then I heard the statement that the employees would be placed into positions within 50 miles of the current institutions and that these positions might not be in corrections. (Again something just didn't sound right about this.)

After the shock came anger, I was angry at the way we (the employees) were notified of the closing. Some of us were at home, and some were on shift working and were informed by the inmates that this was revealed on the news. I believe that we may be employees of the department of corrections, state workers and tax payers, but most of all we are people! People deserve respect, people deserve honesty and people deserve to be kept informed.

After the anger came questions. Many, many questions. Some of which are: Why were we scheduled to close? Why were we mistreated like this? What is the timeline? These are only a few of the questions. Although Mr. Wetzel took responsibility for the way we were informed, he has never apologized for this. A few days later the inmates at these institutions were informed that the department of corrections would do all it could to make this move cause as little inconvenience as possible. No one at our institution was told we would be inconvenienced as little as possible. Quite the contrary some of us were given as little as 2 days to decide the fate of our careers. Still to today, over a month since the announcement, most of us do not know anything more than we did on January 9th.

It appears to the majority of us that we are being treated as numbers. And if the numbers decrease so much the better. In July of 1992 I was given a book and had to sign an acknowledgement of, receipt, understanding and obedience to a "Department of Corrections Code of Ethics". This is given to every employee of the department and is intended to promote the professionalism, integrity, honesty and discipline of all members of this profession. Section B number 10 states "**Employees are expected to treat their peers, supervisors, and the general public with respect and conduct themselves properly and professionally at all times; unacceptable conduct or insolence will not be tolerated.**" Growing up in my house, and later as a noncommissioned officer in the United States navy I was taught to lead by example. As a trainee, officer, sergeant and later as a training sergeant I would use my conduct as an example to those I supervised, related to, trained and mentored. This very core of behavior is essential to establish a respect from any person. However this is not how

the department or its secretary has treated us as employees or any of the citizens of Pennsylvania.

In the more than 4 weeks since the announcement of the closing all of the statements that were given by the secretary have changed, numerous times. I believe the time has come to actually tell the truth! Give the real reasons as to why these institutions are closing, give the real reason for opening SCI Benner early, and why the department has treated its employees as inhuman numbers. I am hoping that this panel can share in my belief that this veil of secrecy should not be allowed to continue over the eyes of the citizens of the great commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Every day, when I go to work, I walk into an institution of over 1500 inmates, many violent offenders and, I trust that the brother and sister employees "have my back", and if I need assistance they will be there. And up until January 9th I thought I could count on the entire department to also "have my back", and now I feel like they just shanked me in my back.

I would like to thank all of the senators, representatives and people for allowing me to come forward and address my concerns to this auspicious panel. I hope that my testimony has brought a little understanding of the impact this situation has on all of the employees involved.

If you have any questions that I could answer I would be more than happy to answer them.