



NEWS RELEASE

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OCSEA staying vigilant as Aramark food service takeover begins Sunday

Aramark, the winner of the bid to serve food to Ohio's incarcerated felons, will begin its contract on Sunday, Sept. 8. Beginning that day, food service will be delivered in state prisons by the same private company who overcharged the State of Ohio \$2 million in hidden costs in the 90s.

The union representing the majority of Corrections employees in the Ohio Dept. of Rehabilitation and Correction says it will be on alert during the transition period to a private food service vendor. "We will be vigilant and watching to be sure that Aramark maintains its contractual obligation and sustains an adequate level of security in the prisons," said OCSEA President Christopher Mabe. "We will be monitoring this contract very closely."

The union says the takeover will continue to weaken security in Ohio's prisons since private food service workers are not trained in protection and security and cannot respond to emergencies. "With the events of the week and the increase in violent incidents throughout the system over the last year, this is not the time to make major system changes in the operation of DR&C," said Mabe.

The union expects the turnover this weekend could include the use of untrained, out-of-state contract employees and exempt state workers to fill gaps in Aramark's staffing levels.

The union has been critical of the privatization proposal since its inception, believing it will make an already dangerous prison system less safe. "Understaffing, overcrowding and continued assaults on staff are still making our prisons unsafe and putting employees at risk. A major system change like privatizing food service puts staff and inmates at even greater risk," said Mabe. "Not only are we watching over the safety and security of inmates, now we're responsible for additional employees who can't protect themselves."

The union has also refuted Aramark's seemingly low per meal cost, which doesn't adequately account for transactional costs like unemployment compensation, equipment or costs associated with security and contract monitoring.

OCSEA represents approximately 30,000 public employees who work in a wide range of security, regulatory, administrative, direct care, maintenance, customer service and other positions, including approximately, 8,000 in the DR&C. For more information, contact Sally Meckling, 614-865-2602 or 614-404-3881 (cell).