



NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release
Oct. 10, 2013

Pattern of scapegoating Correction Officers ignores real problem in Ohio prisons

Leaders of the Ohio Civil Service Employees Association said today that an “after-action” report by the Ohio Dept. of Rehabilitation and Correction unfairly scapegoats Correction Officers yet again, and that there appears to be a pattern of scapegoating front-line workers after a spate of high profile prison suicides.

“Why isn’t DR&C focused on the systemic and more dangerous problems of increased violence, overcrowding or the need for mental health services in our prisons?” asked OCSEA President Christopher Mabe. “It appears that DR&C is trying to deflect criticism and, ultimately, ignore the real problems at hand. Instead, once again, they are scapegoating our officers who are just trying to get their jobs done in an extremely challenging environment,” said Mabe.

“This is about the failed policies of this administration, not our COs who put their lives in danger every day,” Mabe said. “If anything, DR&C is setting up unrealistic expectations and then blaming the staff. We don’t set policy. We’re not the ones cutting posts.”

“The report says flat out that administrators and supervisors didn’t know or didn’t follow protocol, yet Correction Officers are the only ones getting the blame,” said Mabe.

The Corrections Reception Center, where Ariel Castro was found dead of an apparent suicide, is one of the most overcrowded prisons in the system, at 193 percent overcapacity. Physical assaults that result in injury are up 100 percent in just one year.

“Our Correction Officers have a job to do. They aren’t sitting behind some desk with their feet up on the table waiting for their shift to end,” said OCSEA Corrections Assembly President Jimmy Adkins, who works at Marysville Reformatory for Women “If a CO works to post order you won’t get the job done. Prisons are too overcrowded and understaffed for that. If anything out of the ordinary happens – which happens often – you are behind from square one.”

“We challenge this report. Anytime you redact information from a report, you are left with the question: What are they hiding?” asked Adkins.

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 Ohio DR&C. For more information, contact Sally Meckling, 614-865-2602 or 614-404-3881 (cell).