



## NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

Nov. 21, 2013

# Union leaders in DYS: Scioto youth facility closure “dangerous” and “unnecessary”

Westerville – The Ohio Department of Youth Services has announced it is seeking to close the Scioto Juvenile Correctional Facility, the fifth youth facility the agency will shutter in just four years. Nearly 150 members of the Ohio Civil Service Employees Association work at the institution in Delaware. In all, nearly 1,000 DYS employees have been displaced since 2009.

OCSEA union leaders believe the closures are putting youth in the remaining DYS facilities and in Community Correctional Facilities (CCFs) at risk. “Closures put stress on the entire youth system,” said OCSEA DYS Assembly President Annie Person. “All DYS is doing is shuffling these kids into CCFs in the private sector. But those facilities are already bursting at the seams,” said Person. DYS has even indicated it will have to release a Request for Proposal to develop more private juvenile facilities as a result of the closure.

“In the end, this is simply another outsourcing scheme to reduce wages, avoid accountability and degrade oversight,” said OCSEA President Christopher Mabe. “They’re moving youth to a less secure environment that has no track record of success. This is nothing but a dangerous shell game, and is completely unnecessary,” said Mabe.

Not only will the closures mean potential overcrowding in the remaining DYS facilities, but the reduction will also limit the agency’s ability to combat gang violence, a major concern among staff in DYS. “Now that we’ve limited facilities, we have no option to separate gang members from each other,” said OCSEA Staff Representative Rusty Burkepile, who says the elimination of Scioto will mean only the Circleville and Indian River juvenile facilities will take disruptive youth and gang members. Burkepile is a former Juvenile Corrections Officer who worked at the Indian River facility in Massillon.

“CCFs already can’t handle the youth they have. Closing Scioto will only add to the problem,” said Person.

*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 529 in the Ohio Dept. of Youth Services. For more information, contact Sally Meckling, 614-865-2602 or 614-404-3881 (cell).*