



Testimony in Support of House Bill 2213

April 6, 2015

Chair Dembrow and Members of the Senate Workforce Committee:

My name is Steve Caputo. I have worked for DOC as a Food Services Coordinator at Mill Creek Correctional Facility for over 14 years. I have also worked shifts at the Oregon State Penitentiary (OSP).

Part of my daily routine is to issue tools and knives to the inmate kitchen crew that I supervise, often alone, which can number anywhere from 4 to over 20 inmates depending on time of day. The tools include 16" metal serving utensils such as spoons, spatulas, tongs and scoops. The knives will usually be 12" chef knives, although we use smaller utility knives also. These are tethered to a prep table and have a reach of approximately 2-3 feet. My cooks also use 3-4 foot long metal stirrers, which look like boat oars, that are not secured. One of these stirrers was recently used in an inmate-on-inmate assault at OSP. As a result, it is normal for me to be surrounded and vastly outnumbered by inmates who have access to items that can be used as weapons. While it has not happened to me, Food Coordinators have been attacked by inmates in the facilities. This will happen with no warning. The most recent case happened even though the inmate was in the process of being restrained by security staff. We have to always be prepared and ready in the event of an assault, whether it is directed towards staff or inmates. I have had fights break out in front of me and even had an inmate that was standing next to me be assaulted by another inmate. This could easily have been a diversion that would leave me vulnerable to an attack by another inmate. It is with these very real possibilities that we work and deal with every day.

I urge you to support House Bill 2213.

Thank you,

Steve Caputo
Vice President Mill Creek Correctional Facility
Association of Oregon Corrections Employees