

Chairs Evans and Sollman, and members of the committee,

At Coffee Creek Correctional Facility, we are required to work two mandatory shifts every week. This sometimes means back to back 16-hour shifts, which gives us limited amount of sleep. If we choose to volunteer overtime to avoid a mandate, we are still required to work two mandatory shifts (meaning we more then likely will be working 3 back-to-back 16-hour shifts).

It's extremely dangerous. Working in a correctional facility means you need to be able to make split second decisions at any given moment. Mandatory overtime impacts our ability to process what's going on around us due to sleep deprivation. We can seriously get hurt or worse. Mandatory overtime affects the safety and security of everyone in the facility.

It's difficult to make any plans with family or get things done outside of work because we don't know if we're going to be able to go home or not. It's kind of a gamble, and that's hard for our families. This causes severe problems with our children and marriages. When we do get home after a mandate, all we want to do is sleep and get ready for the next day because we more than likely are going to get mandated again. It's depressing. We truly have no lives outside of work and if we request some time off due to the mental stress, it gets denied due to needing staff members to work mandated shifts.

I suffer from sleep deprivation and insomnia almost every night. I probably get about 3 to 4 hours of sleep most of my week due to the mental strain of working so much. It causes depression and it affects not just me, but my family as well. It's gotten to the point to where I feel like sometimes my body is on auto pilot and my mind is asleep. It's extremely dangerous.

I love this career, but I can't stress it enough when I say that it's dangerous. We are required to keep everyone safe in the facility and when we are not getting a full amount of rest this means we are not working at our best. It's especially dangerous when you have to drive 45 mins to an hour home down the I-5 at 5:45am after finishing a 16-hour shift. We can seriously hurt/kill someone or ourselves. It truly feels like we are not being heard. It feels like management does not care about things like this, all they care about is filling the roster. It's like they forget that we are actual people sometimes. This has to change.

We need more staff, so that we don't have to wear ourselves out and put ourselves and the people we serve at risk.

Pete Romero

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