

Chairs Evans and Sollman, and members of the committee,

There aren't enough staff members at my facility, and because of that I work four twelve-hour shifts a week to avoid mandatory overtime shifts.

The constant utilization of mandatory overtime has made working here difficult due to the effect it has on the mental state of myself and coworkers. It has made many members of the work force disdainful towards the managers and administrators of the DOC. We're often short-tempered and hostile because we're overworked, and this has resulted in an unhealthy relationship with the work that we do. I find that a common conversation here is regarding staff attempting to find other employment to escape the environment here. There is constant criticism of the department and its decisions which is exacerbated by the constant mandatory overtime abuse.

Because I work a lot of voluntary overtime in an attempt to avoid the mandatory overtime, I see my family less often. I get less done in my personal life and I fear it may have a lasting impact. In recent months, I separated from my fiancé. Part of the reason he and I separated was my lack of presence at home. I recently learned there are approximately eleven other staff members currently going through a divorce, and I imagine if asked, a lack of presence in their personal lives would have played a role. Mandatory overtime, and the voluntary overtime that we work to try to avoid it, is proving to be unhealthy socially, mentally and emotionally.

It has made me into an unsettlingly darker person mentally and emotionally than I was prior to my employment with the department. I believe the ever-looming chance of being mandated for overtime and the anxiety that accompanies it coupled with the environment of the department has had a profoundly negative impact on our mental health. Oftentimes I believe we don't even realize it. I have been told that I have changed immeasurably since beginning my employment here.

We need to hire more staff, because the toll that working here right now is taking on all of us is too great. We can't carry on this way.

Kyle Bolson

Oregon Department of Corrections