



NEWS:

State Paying Millions in Overtime Annually to Maintain Prison Security

MAY 26, 2017 – A report released this week by the Office of Auditor of Accounts (AOA) confirmed that the Department of Correction (DOC) remains reliant on the ample use of overtime to keep the state's prison system secure.

The analysis of DOC's overtime expenditures was undertaken in conjunction with an independent review ordered by Gov. John Carney in the wake of the February riot at the James T. Vaughn Correctional Center (JTVCC) that resulted in the taking of hostages and the death of a correctional officer.

During Fiscal Year 2016, the DOC paid \$21.9 million in overtime -- far more than any other state agency. The department's overtime expenditure was nearly double that of the runner-up, the Department of Safety and Homeland Security, which had a total overtime outlay of \$12.1 million. Thirty-eight percent of the state's total overtime spending originated in the DOC.

"The report supports what we have known for a long time," said State Rep. Steve Smyk, R-Milton-Lewes, who has advocated for better pay and working conditions for correctional officers for the last several years. "The DOC is understaffed and excessively dependent on the use of overtime.



State Rep. Steve Smyk

"What a lot of people do not realize is that much of this overtime is not voluntary," Rep. Smyk said. "Correctional officers with less than 20 years of service can be 'frozen,' or forced to work additional hours after their shift ends. Never knowing if you are going to be able to leave at the end of your shift plays havoc with these officers' personal lives, kills morale, and facilitates fatigue. It is one of the reasons the state has been challenged to retain trained C-Os."

In FY 2016, 2,082 of the Department of Correction's 2,728 employees were paid overtime.

To read the complete Auditor's report, [click here](#).