



AFSCME-LOCAL 810-DISTRICT COUNCIL 47

**AMERICAN FEDERATION OF STATE, COUNTY, AND MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES AFL-CIO
FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA-COURT OF COMMON PLEAS PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES
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New legislation (House Bills 4, 5, 6, 7) will create a much greater burden on county probation and parole services. As the President of Local 810 and the representative of the officers that will be affected, I must express my concern that without the proper funding, the impetus for the legislation will be thwarted and an even greater crisis will be created within the Adult Probation /Parole Department (APPD) in Philadelphia.

Long term inadequate funding of the APPD has created an agency that cannot properly provide for:

1. the safety needs of the public
2. the rehabilitation of offenders
3. the satisfaction of court orders
4. the reduction of recidivism
5. the restoration of crime victims

Our veteran officers are making \$5,500 less than City of Philadelphia Social Workers. They make approximately \$6,000 less than Berks County Officers and \$12,000 less than Bucks County Officers. They also make less than Pennsylvania State Police and State Parole Officers. This pay disparity has existed for at least 25 years.

Substandard wages for the veteran officers causes the turnover of officers on a consistent basis, resulting in:

1. Large unsupervised caseloads superficially monitored by overworked officers with large caseloads of their own.
2. "Triage" type supervision that focuses on caseload management at the expense of offender rehabilitation.
3. Excessive concern with caseload management that makes violating an offender and placing him/her in custody an efficient way of reducing caseload size.
4. Veteran officers spending large amounts of time mentoring/training rookie officers.
5. Increased stress for veteran officers already performing work that by its very nature is stressful.
6. Increased difficulty in completing court orders and enforcing judicial stipulations.
7. Offenders "slipping through the cracks" and being on absconder status in the community, raising concerns about public safety.

There is simply not enough time in a normal workweek (First Judicial District {FJD} policy prohibits its' employees from earning pay for overtime) to offer offenders any kind of substantive counseling to encourage changing the behaviors that result in recidivism and teaching the behaviors that promote rehabilitation.

Additionally, employee turnover is costly. Costs that are directly measurable are separation costs and replacement costs. Some separation costs include administrative functions related to termination and possible litigation costs, particularly for involuntary separation. Some replacement costs include HR processing costs for screening and assessing candidates, time spent by managers interviewing candidates and orientation and training costs. Total costs are

generally figured to be ½ to 1 ½ times the employees' yearly salary. Four hundred and sixty-six (466) Local 810 members were separated from service from 1998 through 2007 with average annual salaries of \$40,000. Using the lowest cost of ½ the annual salary to compute turnover costs for this period, the FJD spent \$9,320,000 between 1998 and 2007 just on employee turnover. That amounts to \$932,000 per year.

Much confusion surrounds the parties responsible for adequately funding probation/parole services at the county level. Who actually is accountable to the public for keeping their communities safe and rehabilitating the offenders who live in virtually every neighborhood of Philadelphia? City Council feels that it is the State's responsibility. The State feels it is the City's responsibility. The FJD thinks it is the City and the State's responsibility. And so it goes. The City of Philadelphia resents having to fund a State agency (FJD) without having any input into how the agency operates. The FJD provides a service for the City and feels therefore that the City should fund the agency. The State and the City cannot agree on their respective levels of financial commitment to the FJD and have been bickering and squabbling over ongoing funding responsibilities for years. The citizens of Philadelphia deserve better. Our government is supposed to come together for the common good and to carry out the duties owed to the public that the public cannot do for themselves. The impact of Probation/Parole services on public safety should prompt all parties to meet their obligations in a timely and effective manner.

Local 810 has encountered various rationales for why our members are not receiving competitive wages:

1. The FJD agrees that our officers are not receiving a competitive wage and have asked City Council at the budget hearings for funds to bring our salaries to the level of the City Social Workers. However, these funds are never put in their general budget.
2. City Council has said at the budget hearings that they would like to give us the funds, but it is not their responsibility; it is the State's.
3. The State Bureau of Probation Services has asked the Governor's Budget Office to fund the Grant-in-Aid at 80%, as mandated, but usually gets about half of that amount (2008 – 41.9%)

Philadelphia City Council members make over \$100,000 per year. Philadelphia Probation Officers are maxing out at \$49,833. San Diego City Council members voted themselves a 25% raise in April, 2008. Their rationale was that they felt they should be compensated as highly as Philadelphia City Council members. Using that same rationale, veteran Local 810 officers should be making \$70,000 because that is what San Diego veteran Probation Officers are making.

Also, Local 810 was told by the FJD approximately 2 months ago, that Directors in the FJD (not state employees) were given a \$10,000 yearly raise (\$96,000/year). Many of these Directors only have a high school education and these slots are generally recognized as political patronage positions. This raise was given even though the FJD cannot afford to hire Receptionists and instead has Probation Officers and Probation Officer Supervisors filling in and doing Receptionist duties.

These gross inequities demonstrate the long standing problem with the pay disparity that exists for Philadelphia County Probation Officers and the general lack of regard for the consequences of ignoring the problem.