

**REPORT OF  
THE VIRGINIA STATE CRIME COMMISSION**

**STAFFING NEEDS AND LEVELS  
WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF  
CORRECTIONS AND A  
REEVALUATION OF RETIREMENT  
BENEFITS OF PROBATION &  
PAROLE OFFICERS AND  
CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS**

**TO THE GOVERNOR AND  
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA**



**HOUSE DOCUMENT NO. 81**

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
RICHMOND  
1998**





# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

## VIRGINIA STATE CRIME COMMISSION

General Assembly Building

December 16, 1997

Pich Savage  
Director

MEMBERS  
FROM THE SENATE OF VIRGINIA  
Janet D. Howell, Vice-Chair  
Mark L. Earley  
Kenneth W. Stolle

FROM THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
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Jean W. Cunningham  
John J. Davies, II  
R. Dreigh Deeds  
Raymond R. Guest, Jr.

APPOINTMENTS BY THE GOVERNOR  
Robert C. Bobb  
Terry W. Hawkins  
Robert J. Humphreys

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE  
Richard Cullen

To: The Honorable James S. Gilmore III, and  
Members of the Virginia General Assembly:

House Joint Resolution 465, agreed to by the 1997 General Assembly, directed the Virginia State Crime Commission to conduct a study on the staffing needs and levels within the Department of Corrections and to evaluate the retirement benefits of correctional officers and probation & parole officers and to submit its findings and recommendations to the Governor and 1998 session of the General Assembly.

In fulfilling this directive, a study was conducted by the Virginia State Crime Commission in 1997. I have the honor of submitting herewith the study report.

Respectively submitted,

Clifton A. Woodrum  
Chairman

CAW:jrp



**MEMBERS OF THE VIRGINIA STATE CRIME COMMISSION  
1997**

**From the Senate of Virginia:**

Janet D. Howell, Vice Chair  
Mark L. Earley  
Kenneth W. Stolle

**From the House of Delegates:**

Clifton A. Woodrum, Chairman  
James F. Almand  
Jean W. Cunningham  
John W. Davies, III  
R. Creigh Deeds  
Raymond R. Guest, Jr.

**Appointments by the Governor:**

Robert C. Bobb  
Sheriff Terry W. Hawkins  
Robert J. Humphreys

**Attorney General:**

Richard C. Cullen



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## **HJR 465: Study of the staffing needs and levels within Department of Corrections and a reevaluation of the retirement benefits of probation and parole and correctional officers.**

### **I. Authority for the Study**

The 1997 General Assembly approved House Joint Resolution 465, sponsored by Delegate Clifton A. Woodrum, directing the Virginia State Crime Commission to conduct a study of the staffing needs and levels, particularly institutional security staff, within the Department of Corrections, and to reevaluate the retirement benefits of probation and parole officers. The Crime Commission was directed to submit its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 1998 General Assembly.

Section 9-125 of the Code of Virginia establishes and directs the Virginia State Crime Commission “to study, report, and make recommendations on all areas of public safety and protection.” Section 9-127 of the Code of Virginia provides that “the Commission shall have the duty and power to make such studies and gather information in order to accomplish its purpose, as set forth in Section 9-125, and to formulate recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly.” Section 9-134 authorizes the Commission to “conduct private and public hearings.” The Virginia State Crime Commission, in fulfilling its legislative mandate, undertook the study of the staffing needs and levels within the Department of Corrections and the reevaluation of the retirement benefits of probation and parole officers and correctional officers in order to promote employee retention.

## **II. Members Appointed to Serve**

At the April 15, 1997 meeting of the Crime Commission, Chairman Clifton A. Woodrum selected Senator Janet D. Howell to serve as Chairman of the Law Enforcement Subcommittee and Delegate Raymond Guest to chair the Corrections Subcommittee. The following members of the Crime Commission were selected to serve on the respective subcommittees:

### Law Enforcement Subcommittee

Senator Janet D. Howell, Sub-Chair

Delegate James F. Almand

Mr. Robert C. Bobb

Delegate R. Creigh Deeds

Senator Mark L. Early

Mr. James S. Gilmore, III

Mr. Robert J. Humphreys

### Corrections Subcommittee

Delegate Raymond R. Guest

Delegate James F. Almand

Delegate Jean W. Cunningham

Delegate John J. Davies, III

Sheriff Terry W. Hawkins

Senator Kenneth W. Stolle

Delegate Clifton A. Woodrum

## **III. Executive Summary**

The purpose of the study on staffing levels and retirement benefits for certain correctional employees was to recommend strategies to the Department of Corrections for improving retention of correctional officers and provide an alternative recommendation to inclusion in the SPORS system for enhancing the retirement benefits of both correctional officers and probation and parole officers. The study evolved from two previous Crime Commission studies on these issues. The recommendations reflect a collaborative effort between the Crime Commission staff and the Department of Corrections.

The recommendations include several budget amendments for strategies to address improved correctional officer morale and retention:

- Recommend a one grade upgrade for new correctional officers, with a one step increase for current employees.
- Recommend tuition reimbursements for officers studying for certificates or degrees.
- Recommend formal on the job training programs.
- Increase the uniforms issued to officers to last a full week.

A comprehensive staffing study by the Department of Corrections was last conducted in 1985. The Crime Commission, in a previous study, recommended that this study be updated to reflect the significant number of new facilities which have come online since 1985. The Department was requested to complete the study by December, 1998; however, due to delays in opening some of the new prisons the Department asked for an extension until December, 1998. The Crime Commission concurred.

Finally, the Crime Commission recommended a resolution directing the Department of Corrections to develop an enhanced retirement plan for correctional officers and probation and parole officers. The plan will include options for employee/Commonwealth contributions. The plan will be completed by October 1, 1998 and submitted to the Crime Commission, House Appropriations Committee, and Senate Finance Committee for consideration.

#### **IV. Background**

The HJR 465 study on staffing needs in the Department of Corrections and examination of retirement benefits of certain correctional employees is a continuation of two previous Crime Commission studies: HJR 490 (1995) and HJR 113 (1996). These studies focused on overtime requirements, officer retention, pay for correctional officers, and

retirement benefits for correctional officers and probation and parole officers. The recommendations of these previous studies included:

- The development of a differential pay system for correctional officers based upon the custody level of the prison where the officer is working.
- A directive to the Department of Corrections to update its 1985 staffing study.
- A study of the retirement benefits for correctional officers and probation and parole officers.

The Crime Commission staff worked with the Department of Corrections to develop an appropriate response to each of these issues. The major thrust of the HJR 465 study was to develop a response to the significant turnover rate of correctional officers (See Appendix B) and to find a feasible means of providing enhanced retirement benefits to both correctional officers and probation and parole officers in recognition of the serious threats to personal safety which they face daily and to attempt to achieve some degree of equity with the benefits currently provided to local and regional jail personnel.

## **V. Correctional Officer Turnover**

During the previous year the Department of Corrections conducted an internal study on the issue of correctional officer turnover. The findings indicate that first year correctional officers have a thirty percent (30%) or higher turnover rate. Turnover is defined by the state's personnel policies as separation from state service. This could be voluntary resignation, removal, separation due to layoffs, retirement or death. Many factors account for the seemingly turnover rate of correctional officers. The position is hazardous and subject to a high level of stress. Officers are required to maintain control of dangerous and manipulative inmates, keeping constantly alert to protect themselves

and their fellow workers as well as the inmates. Mandated overtime is a routine occurrence, attendance in all kinds of weather, on holidays, weekends, etc. put an additional strain on the officer and his family. Increasing the pay for these officers would be one way to reward and retain them but an across the board increase is not feasible at this time. The Department examined other measures to boost morale of the officers and to develop more of a career track for the officers. The Department of Corrections' study results are included in Appendix B.

## **VI. Enhanced Retirement Benefits for Certain Corrections' Employees**

Virginia currently provides a 30-year retirement plan with a minimum age of 55. Only Maryland and Kentucky offered some form of 20-year retirement. West Virginia requires age 55 plus a minimum of 25 years of service. North Carolina and the City of Richmond are the same as is currently provided to correctional officers. Other major jurisdictions in Virginia provide the SPORS supplement to local law enforcement.

Correctional officers have raised concerns regarding their personal safety based upon the ratio of officers to inmate. Additionally, correctional officers are often required to work double shifts, causing extreme fatigue and inattentiveness. Probation and parole officers are even more akin to law enforcement, carrying weapons and supervising convicted felons in the community. The Commonwealth has addressed the daily safety issues of state police through the SPORS program which offers full retirement benefits to state police officers after 20 years of service. The Crime Commission has conducted several studies on extending the SPORS option to other classes of law enforcement, including correctional officers and probation and parole officers. The price tag for inclusion of correctional officers alone is approximately \$26,821,248 biennially. Given the cost of the SPORS option, staff recommended developing an alternative option with an enhanced retirement benefit the Commonwealth could afford.

## **VII. Study Findings and Recommendations**

### **Finding A:**

The proposal for the development of a differential pay system which paid higher salaries to correctional officers serving in more secure facilities was designed to address the high turnover rate of correctional officers and enhance retention of these officers. The Department of Corrections has developed several alternative strategies which they believe will improve officer retention more effectively. These include:

- Recommend a one grade upgrade for new correctional officers, with a one step increase for current employees.
- Recommend tuition reimbursements for officers studying for certificates or degrees.
- Recommend formal on the job training programs.
- Increase the uniforms issued to officers to last a full week.

### **Recommendation 1:**

**Support funding for the upgrade and step increase for correctional officers.**

**FY00 \$5,510,780 (effective November 25, 2000)**

### **Recommendation 2:**

**Support the tuition reimbursement for correctional officers who are seeking degrees or certificates.**

**Tuition Assistance: FY99 \$110,000 FY00 \$110,000**

**Recommendation 3:**

**Fund formal on the job training for correctional officers.**

**On job training: FY99 \$222,000 FY00 \$222,000**

**Recommendation 4:**

**Increase uniforms and shoes issued to officers to boost morale.**

**Uniforms and shoes: FY99 \$900,000 FY00 \$300,000**

**Finding B:**

The last comprehensive staffing study conducted by the Department of Corrections was in 1985. Significant policy changes have occurred through the abolition of parole, the comprehensive community corrections act, and other related legislative initiatives. There was a recommendation in one of the previous studies for the Department of Corrections to conduct another such study and complete it by the end of 1997. The Department of Corrections currently has a number of new prison construction projects underway and has requested that the staffing study completion deadline be extended in order to allow these prisons to come online.

**Recommendation 1:**

**The Department of Corrections will complete its security staffing study by December 1, 1998 and report to:**

- **Virginia State Crime Commission**
- **House Appropriations Committee**
- **Senate Finance Committee**

## **Finding C:**

Several studies have been conducted to examine the feasibility of including correctional officers and probation & parole officers in the State Police Officer Retirement System (SPORS). The Crime Commission has consistently recognized the special circumstances which these officers work within, including the high stress and personal danger to which they are routinely subjected. Unfortunately, the cost of inclusion in the SPORS program is prohibitively expensive and the monies have not been available to implement the SPORS proposal. Crime Commission staff believes that an enhanced retirement system should be developed for these officers to compensate for the particular nature of their employment and to improve officer retention.

### **Recommendation 1:**

**The Department of Corrections, in consultation with the Virginia Retirement System, will develop options for an enhanced retirement plan for correctional officers and probation & parole officers. The plan will include:**

- **Optional benefit structure; and**
- **Optional methods for employee/Commonwealth funding.**

**The plan will be completed by October 1, 1998 for consideration by the 1999 General Assembly. The plan will be presented to:**

- **Virginia State Crime Commission**
- **House Appropriations Committee**
- **Senate Finance Committee**



## **Appendix A**

### **HJR 495 Study Resolution**



# GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA -- 1997 SESSION

## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 465

*Directing the Virginia State Crime Commission to study the staffing needs and levels within the Department of Corrections, and reevaluate the retirement benefits of probation and parole officers.*

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 20, 1997

Agreed to by the Senate, February 19, 1997

WHEREAS, the increased prison population has forced the utilization of mandated overtime by correctional officers to meet additional security demands of the system; and

WHEREAS, with the increasing number of inmates, correctional institution security staff face greater challenges, increased job stress, and heightened personal safety risks; and

WHEREAS, recent legislative changes will further increase the demand for prison beds and corrections staff; and

WHEREAS, safety concerns regarding staffing levels are hampering the recruitment and retention efforts of the Department of Corrections; and

WHEREAS, a high turnover rate represents a substantial drain of state resources; and

WHEREAS, retention of trained correctional staff is critical to public safety; and

WHEREAS, probation and parole officers face almost daily contact with ex-offenders with histories of violence; and

WHEREAS, increasing caseloads make it increasingly difficult for probation and parole officers to adequately serve their clients; and

WHEREAS, ongoing changes in job duties and responsibilities for probation and parole officers, including a greater amount of field work in the offenders' communities, result in increased personal safety risks for these officers; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia State Crime Commission, in a study on correctional officer/probation-parole officer issues, recommended that a study be conducted to reevaluate retirement benefits for probation and parole officers and to study staffing needs, particularly those of correctional institution security and probation and parole staff; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Virginia State Crime Commission be directed to study the staffing needs and levels within the Department of Corrections, particularly institutional security staff and probation and parole officers, and to reevaluate the retirement benefits of probation and parole officers.

The Crime Commission shall receive technical assistance from the appropriate criminal justice agencies, particularly the Department of Corrections, as well as from the staffs of the House Appropriations Committee and the Senate Finance Committee.

The Crime Commission shall complete its work in time to submit its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 1998 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents.



## **Appendix B**

### **Department of Corrections' Correctional Officer Turnover Report**



# **CORRECTIONS OFFICER TURNOVER REPORT**

## **Fiscal Years '96 and '97**

### **AUTHORITY**

The 1997 Virginia Acts of the Assembly, Chapter 924 requires the Director of the Department of Corrections to provide an annual report on employee turnover in the Department of Corrections by facility, beginning with 1996 and 1997, which includes recommendations for reducing the level of turnover, as necessary. The report is to be provided to the Governor and Chairmen of the Senate Finance and House Appropriations Committees.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Department of Corrections has forty-two (42) institutions; twenty-two (22) major institutions currently in operation, and twenty (20) field units. The institutions provide a range of custody from minimum to close custody or controlled movement. Three (3) institutions house female inmates and the remainder are for male inmates. Most facilities are located in predominantly rural areas, some of which are fairly isolated.

Five (5) facilities are under construction with projected 1997-98 inmate loading dates. Two of these facilities will be located in the southwest and two in southside Virginia. The women's facility will be located in Fluvanna County.

During fiscal year 1997 the Department averaged 5,734 Officers, 1,145 at the Corrections Officer (first year) level and 4,589 at the Corrections Officer Senior level. In fiscal year

1998 the Department will increase the security Officer force by approximately 1,450 Officers, to staff the facilities currently under construction.

Corrections Officers have very hazardous and stressful jobs to perform. In addition to maintaining control of many dangerous and manipulative inmates, they must be constantly alert to protect themselves and ensure the health and safety of their co-workers and inmates under their supervision. These are dedicated, hard working employees who are many times asked to forego family events and holiday celebrations to provide supervision for inmates and to ensure public safety twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week, three hundred and sixty-five days per year. They are expected to be present on the job no matter the weather and work overtime whenever needed. This is not a job just anyone can perform and it is not the job everyone wants. Due to the impending opening of the new facilities, the Department must continue to expand its applicant pool to find adequate numbers of persons who are qualified and willing to make these sacrifices for the job.

Corrections Officers are hired into Grade 7 positions (current salary range \$19,582 to \$30,572). The Department considers the range of applicants for employment in Corrections Officer positions from those with high school diplomas or General Equivalency Diplomas (GEDs) and no experience to those who with extensive law enforcement or Corrections backgrounds. Salary is negotiated within the Grade 7 range based upon related education, training and experience.

Newly hired Corrections Officers are required to participate in mandated training based on standards set the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS). The training includes three (3) weeks of classroom instruction in a Corrections institution. Following completion of institutional training, the Officer is scheduled for four weeks of Academy training.

At the Academy employees are taught policies, procedures and regulations related to Corrections, inmate management and control, defensive tactics, search/restraint procedures, military drills, and lethal and non-lethal weapons use. Officers are tested on their comprehension of classroom material and must successfully complete training for continued employment. Training is performance based. It is designed to develop the trainees' skills and knowledge relative to the Officers' job functions. Officers are expected to apply classroom instruction in simulated training events comparable to situations they may experience on the job. They must demonstrate they possess the skills necessary to perform the job and know relevant policies, procedures and regulations impacting the simulated event.

Upon successful completion of Academy training, Officers are returned to the



institution where they complete their a twelve (12) month probationary period during which they are expected to continue their training on the job. If the Officer performs satisfactorily on the job, at the end of the twelve month period, he receives an Interclass Advancement to Corrections Officer Senior. This is, in effect, a "promotion" to a Grade 8 and the employee receives a four (4) step increase in pay.

## **CORRECTIONS OFFICER TURNOVER**

There are many definitions of and methods for calculation of turnover. Data included in this report is based on the State's definition of turnover provided by the Department of Personnel and Training (DPT). DPT defines turnover as separation from State service. Separation may be by voluntary resignation, removal, separation at the expiration of layoff, retirement or death. Transfer of employees between Corrections facilities or to other State agencies is not defined as turnover, nor are promotions, demotions or leaves without pay defined as turnover.

Historically, the Department has experienced an average of thirty percent (30%) or higher turnover in its first year Corrections Officers. The percentages over the past ten years range from 31.21% in FY92 to a high of 54.16% in FY88. The FY97 rate of turnover is 32.40%, which is the lowest the rate has been in the past three years. This rate reflects a 6.47% reduction from FY96.

The following tables provide turnover data for Corrections Officers and Corrections Officers Senior for FY96 and FY97.

## TURNOVER DATA

**Table I** A comparison of combined turnover totals for Corrections Officers and Corrections Officers Senior for fiscal years '96 and '97 identified by institution.

Agency Number	Institution	FY '96		FY '97	
		Turnover/Percentage	Turnover/Percentage	Turnover/Percentage	Turnover/Percentage
709,721	Powhatan Correctional Center	60	16.22%	93	23.66%
716	Virginia Correctional Center for Women	26	19.85	19	13.97
717,736,740	Southampton Correctional Center	38	17.35	29	12.83
718	Bland Correctional Center	16	9.41	7	4.14
719	James River Correctional Center	32	19.39	22	12.87
730	Brunswick Correctional Center	49	19.84	44	16.48
731	Staunton Correctional Center	16	9.09	12	7.02
737	St. Brides Correctional Center	30	29.13	28	27.18
744	Mecklenburg Correctional Center	20	8.97	26	12.26
745	Nottoway Correctional Center	51	15.89	45	15.79
747	Marion Correctional Treatment Center	6	4.58	11	8.33
749	Buckingham Correctional Center	51	20.99	40	16.46
752	Deep Meadow Correctional Center	46	30.46	31	18.79
753	Deerfield Correctional Center	16	12.80	18	15.00
754	Augusta Correctional Center	80	26.49	68	22.52
757	Western Region Correctional Field Units	20	6.49	24	7.84
759	Northern Region Correctional Field Units	30	12.35	25	10.29
760	Central Region Correctional Field Units	10	4.76	18	7.89
761	Tidewater Correctional Unit	4	10.53	4	16.67
768	Keen Mountain Correctional Center	11	5.82	17	8.33
769	Greensville Correctional Center	218	37.01	207	33.33
770	Dillwyn Correctional Center	26	13.68	27	14.21
771	Indian Creek Correctional Center	36	19.78	26	14.05
772	Haynesville Correctional Center	50	24.04	47	22.71
773	Coffeewood Correctional Center	63	34.24	41	20.30
774	Lunenburg Correctional Center	33	36.26%	26	13.68%
<b>Totals</b>		<b>1,040</b>	<b>18.88%</b>	<b>955</b>	<b>16.66%</b>

**Table II** Turnover data for Corrections Officers for fiscal year '96 identified by institution.

Agency #	Institution	Average Employment	Turnover	Percentage
709,721	Powhatan Correctional Center	82	29	35.37%
716	Virginia Correctional Center for Women	25	10	40.00
717,736,740	Southampton Correctional Center	51	14	27.45
718	Bland Correctional Center	16	3	18.75
719	James River Correctional Center	40	20	50.00
730	Brunswick Correctional Center	57	25	43.86
731	Staunton Correctional Center	16	3	18.75
737	St. Brides Correctional Center	17	11	64.71
744	Mecklenburg Correctional Center	17	2	11.76
745	Nottoway Correctional Center	64	25	39.06
747	Marion Correctional Treatment Center	1	0	0
749	Buckingham Correctional Center	62	21	33.87
752	Deep Meadow Correctional Center	41	27	65.85
753	Deerfield Correctional Center	43	7	16.28
754	Augusta Correctional Center	73	40	54.79
757	Western Region Correctional Field Units	18	0	0
759	Northern Region Correctional Field Units	48	12	25.00
760	Central Region Correctional Field Units	14	1	7.14
761	Tidewater Correctional Unit	4	1	25.00
768	Keen Mountain Correctional Center	47	2	4.26
769	Greensville Correctional Center	216	129	59.72
770	Dillwyn Correctional Center	45	9	20.00
771	Indian Creek Correctional Center	35	11	31.43
772	Haynesville Correctional Center	60	22	36.67
773	Coffeewood Correctional Center	112	37	33.04
774	Lunenburg Correctional Center	67	33	49.25%
<b>Totals</b>		<b>1,271</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>38.87%</b>

**Table III** Turnover data for Corrections Officer Seniors for fiscal year '96 identified by institution.

Agency #	Institution	Average Employment	Turnover	Percentage
709,721	Powhatan Correctional Center	288	33	11.46%
716	Virginia Correctional Center for Women	106	16	15.09
717,736,740	Southampton Correctional Center	168	24	14.29
718	Bland Correctional Center	154	13	8.44
719	James River Correctional Center	125	12	9.60
730	Brunswick Correctional Center	190	24	12.63
731	Staunton Correctional Center	160	13	8.13
737	St. Brides Correctional Center	86	19	22.09
744	Mecklenburg Correctional Center	206	18	8.74
745	Nottoway Correctional Center	257	26	10.17
747	Marion Correctional Treatment Center	130	6	4.62
749	Buckingham Correctional Center	181	30	16.57
752	Deep Meadow Correctional Center	110	19	17.27
753	Deerfield Correctional Center	82	9	10.98
754	Augusta Correctional Center	229	40	17.47
757	Western Region Correctional Field Units	290	20	6.90
759	Northern Region Correctional Field Units	195	18	9.23
760	Central Region Correctional Field Units	196	9	4.59
761	Tidewater Correctional Unit	34	3	8.82
768	Keen Mountain Correctional Center	142	9	6.34
769	Greensville Correctional Center	373	89	23.86
770	Dillwyn Correctional Center	145	17	11.72
771	Indian Creek Correctional Center	147	25	17.01
772	Haynesville Correctional Center	148	28	18.92
773	Coffeewood Correctional Center	72	26	36.11
774	Lunenburg Correctional Center	24	0	0%
<b>Totals</b>		<b>4,238</b>	<b>546</b>	<b>12.88%</b>

Table IV Turnover data for Corrections Officers for fiscal year '97 identified by institution.

Agency #	Institution	Average Employment	Turnover	Percentage
709,721	Powhatan Correctional Center	95	40	42.11%
716	Virginia Correctional Center for Women	31	2	6.45
717,736,740	Southampton Correctional Center	40	13	32.50
718	Bland Correctional Center	13	0	0
719	James River Correctional Center	29	6	20.69
730	Brunswick Correctional Center	67	12	17.91
731	Staunton Correctional Center	13	1	7.69
737	St. Brides Correctional Center	23	3	13.04
744	Mecklenburg Correctional Center	20	3	15.00
745	Nottoway Correctional Center	60	16	26.67
747	Marion Correctional Treatment Center	5	0	0
749	Buckingham Correctional Center	57	14	24.56
752	Deep Meadow Correctional Center	45	9	20.00
753	Deerfield Correctional Center	15	3	20.00
754	Augusta Correctional Center	64	28	43.75
757	Western Region Correctional Field Units	23	4	17.39
759	Northern Region Correctional Field Units	18	4	22.22
760	Central Region Correctional Field Units	20	3	15.00
761	Tidewater Correctional Unit	1	0	0
768	Keen Mountain Correctional Center	31	1	3.23
769	Greensville Correctional Center	223	123	55.16
770	Dillwyn Correctional Center	33	11	33.33
771	Indian Creek Correctional Center	26	8	30.77
772	Haynesville Correctional Center	46	21	45.65
773	Coffeewood Correctional Center	65	29	44.62
774	Lunenburg Correctional Center	87	17	19.54%
<b>Totals</b>		<b>1,145</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>32.40%</b>

**Table V** Turnover data for Corrections Officer Seniors for fiscal year '97 identified by institution.

Agency #	Institution	Average Employment	Turnover	Percentage
709,721	Powhatan Correctional Center	298	53	17.79%
716	Virginia Correctional Center for Women	105	17	16.19
717,736,740	Southampton Correctional Center	186	16	8.60
718	Bland Correctional Center	156	7	4.49
719	James River Correctional Center	142	16	11.27
730	Brunswick Correctional Center	200	32	16.00
731	Staunton Correctional Center	158	11	6.96
737	St. Brides Correctional Center	80	25	31.25
744	Mecklenburg Correctional Center	192	23	11.98
745	Nottoway Correctional Center	269	29	10.78
747	Marion Correctional Treatment Center	127	11	8.66
749	Buckingham Correctional Center	186	26	13.98
752	Deep Meadow Correctional Center	120	22	18.33
753	Deerfield Correctional Center	105	15	14.29
754	Augusta Correctional Center	238	40	16.81
757	Western Region Correctional Field Units	283	20	7.07
759	Northern Region Correctional Field Units	225	21	9.33
760	Central Region Correctional Field Units	208	15	7.21
761	Tidewater Correctional Unit	23	4	17.39
768	Keen Mountain Correctional Center	173	16	9.25
769	Greensville Correctional Center	398	84	21.11
770	Dillwyn Correctional Center	157	16	10.19
771	Indian Creek Correctional Center	159	18	11.32
772	Haynesville Correctional Center	161	26	16.15
773	Coffeewood Correctional Center	137	12	8.76
774	Lunenburg Correctional Center	103	9	8.74%
<b>Totals</b>		<b>4,589</b>	<b>584</b>	<b>12.87%</b>

## DEPARTMENT INITIATIVES

The following are actions the Department has implemented to address Corrections Officer turnover:

- o As a part of the Department's Strategic Planning Process, Corrections Officer recruitment and retention have been identified as critical issues for the agency.
- o Established a recruiter position dedicated to recruitment of Corrections Officer applicants and communication of employment benefits to local communities.
- o Completed three (3) projects specifically designed to ascertain the reasons for turnover at the institutions which have consistently experienced high turnover.
- o Reviewed the interview and selection processes to determine if appropriate applicants are being selected for Corrections Officer vacancies.
- o Extended the probationary period for Officers from six (6) months to twelve (12) months to allow a longer training period in which to determine new Officers' suitability for the job.
- o Expanded the current recruitment and advertising budget for Corrections Officers.
- o In order to make the work environment safer and more secure, the Department has expanded the use of agents which reduce the potential for Officer injury when they must restrain inmates who are out of control.
- o Wider use of canines has been implemented to avoid injury to Officers when they must intervene in altercations between/among inmates and control inmate movement.
- o Initiated a review of the Corrections Officer training curriculum relative to content and form to ensure training addresses the work needs of newly employed Officers.
- o Requested and received approval to upgrade Corrections Officers and Corrections Officers Senior for grade 6 and 7 respectively to grade 7 and 8.
- o Began implementation of some creative recruitment and selection procedures which resulted from the Strategic Planning process. The new procedures are being implemented at Powhatan Correctional Center to determine if they may be effective in reduction of turnover.
- o Consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Department has reviewed the medical restrictions placed on Officers which preclude performance of the essential functions of the job. In the past medical restrictions have included no inmate contact, little or no walking, standing and lifting, not working more than

eight hours, not intervening when inmates are out of control and limit where Officers may work in the institution. These employees who cannot function as Corrections Officers have been placed in jobs outside of the security series or where appropriate, the Department has supported disability or service retirement. In addition to the goal of ensuring qualified and capable staff, this has had the serendipitous effect of improving morale for those Officers who had been asked to do the jobs of other security staff with medical restrictions who were not performing all the duties of a Corrections Officer.

- o In the process of finalizing a drug testing program to ensure Officer /staff safety and fitness to work to include pre-employment and random testing.
- o The Department has implemented a number of strategies to identify the causes for separation of Corrections Officers, particularly, first year Corrections Officers, including providing them an opportunity to provide feedback. Officers have told us the following would improve their probability for continued employment:

Recognition of their worth and contribution to the Commonwealth.

Greater starting pay.

An enhanced retirement package which recognizes the hazardous duties they must perform on a regular basis (Note: Corrections Officers are not covered by SPORS or LEOS).

Longevity pay which recognizes security staff for completion of identified periods of employment, such as ten (10) or twenty (20) years of State service.

Specialized training consistent with job requirements.

Tangible rewards/symbols reflective of their contributions to the Department, such as distinctive insignia, different uniforms, badges, service stripes, etc.

A one time educational bonus for obtaining an advanced, related degree.

A uniform allowance for maintenance and repair of uniforms, and issuance of a supply of uniforms to cover the full work week.

Issuance of a pair of shoes/footwear (possibly upon promotion to Corrections Officer Sr.) which would be a monetary benefit to Officers, but would also standardize footwear across the Department.

Allow dual tracking which is a parallel series of classifications that allow employees to advance in grade or class assignment based upon factors other than a traditional supervisory classification progression.



Allow Officers to decide if they want overtime leave and/or overtime pay for hours worked beyond their regular schedule.

The Department has evaluated these and other suggestions and has included many of them on the following list of the Department's recommendations.

## DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

- We recommend that the Corrections Officers Series be included in the State Police Officers Retirement System (SPORS) to properly recognize the hazardous and stressful duties they perform on a daily basis.
- We recommend a one grade regrade for the Corrections Officer Series, with a one step increase for all current employees or to bring them to the new minimum of the grade. This will increase the applicant pool, make the Department more competitive with many local law enforcement agencies and recognize the hazardous and stressful job of Corrections Officers.
- We recommend the approval of one time bonuses to Corrections Officers who obtain certificates and degrees and additional tuition assistance to support the staff taking college credits.
- We recommend that the uniform allowance for Corrections Officers be expanded to provide enough shirts and pants for a five day work week and shoes.
- We recommend the implementation of physical standards for new Corrections Officers and a physical fitness program to assist current Officers.
- We recommend and are in the process of revising the Basic Corrections Officer (BCO) training program to include the use of Field Training Officers.
- We recommend the Department establish a partnership with the Department of Community Colleges to implement the Work Keys System with our Corrections Officers in order to make a skills assessment of our current officers and provide them additional training as well as allowing the Department to match the skills of potential employees with the skills identified as being needed to be a successful Corrections Officer.

