



City of New Bedford

Office of City Council

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Ian Abreu

Councillor at Large

February 21, 2019

Senator Mark C.W. Montigny
State House - Room 312-C
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senator Montigny:

I am writing to you in my official capacity as a Councillor At-Large here in the City of New Bedford to express my unwavering support of **Bill HD. 986 - An Act regarding pay parity for Correctional Officers of the fourteen county Sheriffs' Offices.**

Even though the Bristol County House of Corrections physically sits in the neighboring town of Dartmouth, I am sure you are aware that many of the correctional officers employed at the BCSO are indeed taxpaying, law-abiding citizens of New Bedford and are constituents of mine.

Whether you are a Correctional Officer in Dukes County (which, on average, hosts 40 or so inmates at any given time) or in Bristol County (which, on average, hosts 1,300 inmates at any given time), you should receive a parity in overall compensation.

I was employed at the BCSO as a Case Manager from 2010-2012, and I can tell you from first-hand experience that the professionals at this facility are some of the most upstanding individuals I have ever encountered. Their jobs are very complex, and the misconception we oftentimes hear is that the BCSO does not house some of the most violent offenders in our county, and this is just simply not the case. Murderers, rapists, child molesters, drug traffickers and gang members are all housed at this facility while they are awaiting trial.

The below industry compensation rates for the Correctional Officers at the BCSO has also created a major staffing shortage over the last handful of years; and thus, puts our correctional officers into an even more vulnerable position as many of them need to work above the normal 40-hour work week to fill the open gaps ("forced overtime").

As an elected official, I fully understand and respect that most public policy issues are immersed in debate from folks on both sides of the aisle.

This Bill and proposed legislation is not one of them.

Fair and just compensation for our public safety officials and community heroes is not a "Democratic" or "Republican" issue, it is a moral issue. I urge all of you to work in a bipartisan manner to insure this Bill's successful passage so that our Governor may sign this into law.

Should you have any questions about my position on **Bill HD. 986 - An Act regarding pay parity for Correctional Officers of the fourteen county Sheriffs' Offices**, please feel free to reach out to me at my office.

Sincerely,

Ian Abreu,
Councillor at Large

IA: rrr

cc: File

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