



PRESS RELEASE

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DRC/DYS claim they're moving forward, despite OCSEA counterproposal to keep food service state-run

Columbus – Despite a disastrous pilot 12 years ago and OCSEA activists already having a counter-proposal that saves 11 percent of current prison meal costs, the Dept. of Rehabilitation and Correction and the Dept. of Youth Services say they are moving forward with a Request for Proposal to privatize prison and youth services food operations.

“This has ramifications that are far-reaching, and frankly, pretty scary,” said Annie Person, DYS Assembly President. “This is as much about the security and safety of our prisons and youth facilities as it is about jobs.” Approximately 500 employees in DR&C and DYS would be affected.

“We are going to use every possible tool at our disposal to fight this,” said OCSEA President Christopher Mabe. “This is unfair, unsafe and hurts us all and we will not stand for it. We cannot afford to gamble a service as vital as food service, particularly given the rampant assaults on staff and the near-riot at the private prison.”

The OCSEA Corrections Assembly Leadership work diligently last year and submitted a counterproposal to keep the food service public, which they worked on *with DR&C senior staff*.

“This just makes no sense to us, that just days after we submitted a joint labor/management proposal that reduces the per meal cost by 11 percent, DR&C announces that they're moving to privatize,” said OCSEA Corrections Assembly President Jim Adkins. “Talk about working in bad faith. While we were busy putting together a proposal with Dir. Mohr's own people, they were working behind our backs to pull the rug out from under us.”

OCSEA DR&C activists also plan to testify to legislators about their efforts and the sneak maneuver by DR&C to move forward anyway. DYS activists are also primed to testify.

“These rural areas where many of our prisons are have already been hard hit by the recession. The only way private companies make a profit is by lowering the wages and

reducing the benefits for employees. These areas can't sustain this race to the bottom," said Mabe.

"We know that prisons only run well when everyone involved has the same skin in the game," said Mabe. "Private providers don't have the same skin in the game as we do. Today they're here and tomorrow they're gone--along with their profits to another state."

OCSEA represents 33,000 state employees, including 8,000 members in DR&C and 600 in DYS. For more information contact Sally Meckling, 614-865-2602 or 614-404-3881 (cell).

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