I want to thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

CHAIRMAN WALTON: Thank you very much.

Mr. Meyers?

MR. WAYNE MEYERS: Good morning. My name's Wayne Meyers, and I'm a staff representative representing 5,000 corrections employees in the state of Connecticut.

My duties include arbitration, contract negotiations, grievance processing for our members. My background is I was a retired military. I was involved in corrections in the military. I'm also a retired corrections officer. I worked as a corrections officer for 11 years in Connecticut and retired. And now I work straight for the union.

I gave you guys written testimony about a week ago when I was told to send it out here. I had to do it in a day like most of the folks did. And yesterday -- just really listening to testimony yesterday provoked a lot of thoughts.

I had an interesting conversation with one of the commissioners on the way back to the hotel that really made me think about some of the things I wanted to talk about.

We have only 23,000 inmates in Connecticut.
We have 19 facilities. They range from dormitories to a supermax.

We have one women's facility, which is the hotbed right now for sexual misconduct, both inmate and -- excuse me, both on staff -- on for staff-inmate. We have a very minimal amount of this activity, but that's the number one place, is the women's facility where we see staff-inmate sexual misconduct.

We are -- we do have cross-gender supervision. We have women in the men's facilities. We have men in the women's facilities. We do cross-gender pat-downs, but we don't do any, obviously, cross-gender strips.

I believe our system works pretty good. We've got some flaws. For the most part we don't disagree with management on how things are going.

The next place that I would tell you that I worry about is we have a youth facility that houses young kids, 16-, 17-year-old kids mostly, some 18.

As of this morning we got 681 in there, and 22 of them are 14 and 15 years old because they are found to be unmanageable in the juvenile justice center.

I worry about this place for sexual
misconduct. Gangs, a lot of gang activity in there, a lot of young kids who have impulse control problems.

I didn't bring any numbers out, and I will tell you why. Because I don't believe the numbers. The agency that I work for can take both sides of any argument in five minutes and give you figures to back it up. So we don't believe the numbers.

What you're getting from me is a postcard from the trenches. I spent the whole week before this talking to corrections officers and correctional supervisors who talked to me off the record -- and investigators who talked to me off the record about what they saw in these places, and that's what I bring to you today. I don't bring a perspective from my union or management.

I also brought a copy of our training syllabus. I only have one. I'm going to let you have it. We do a preservice of one-and-a-half-hour training for new officers.

The agency will tell you that we do an hour yearly in our 40-hour IST. I probed that last week. It's all over the map. Some places get it done every year, other places every other year, some in the third year.
And I'm not trying to throw them under the bus. The training time is really tough. Everybody wants to get in. We want to teach management of aggressive behavior. Everybody thinks that their topic is number one. So it's hard to get the stuff in.

I also brought with you (sic) a copy of my collective bargaining agreement. I would be glad to send you more of those if you need them.

I -- like my colleague, I do not believe that Garrity or our collective bargaining agreement flies in the face of eliminating prison rape. I think that we work well within it.

I would tell you candidly that the folks that I work with as a correction officer are not interested in having people who prey -- sexually prey on inmates working with them.

We -- I as a union rep, we give them due process, but they're a safety and security issue to us. And if they are found guilty and did commit this, we're not interested in having them work with us either.

I would also tell you that in the state where I work, it's a very low percentage.

99 percent of our people come to work every day and
do a good job. Get spit at, have urine thrown on them, and get assaulted. I have been -- I have had all of those done to me. I've also had -- I've got an artificial knee as a result of a fight that I had to jump in to help a young kid who was getting beat bad.

So our people get beat a lot. And most of them are real good folks who do a real good job. And sometimes I think we get painted with this broad brush, and I resent it because our folks, for the most part, are professional.

I am, again, in favor of the cross-gender supervision. I think that it's a good model. I will tell you that it's my opinion that the addition of female officers into the male facilities has had a calming effect since I have been involved with it. And I think that that was a good idea for us.

There were many people who looked like me, old, fat, and bald-headed, who weren't interested when that came about but who are now seeing that this works real well for us.

My concerns on training is that it's sporadic and it's not enough. We have a real 12-minute dated video that we show new inmates, and I don't think it's enough, on reporting.
I think -- we do have an assessment unit when they come in where they stay 48 hours, and they see a 12-minute video on what to do if there -- you know, if some predator comes along.

Again, I tried to pick Commissioner Fellner's brain last night on some of these things. There are some things we can do that don't cost us any money. And the people I work for, that's what they're looking for. They're looking for stuff that we can do that doesn't cost anything because they're straight out with money.

One of the things that we can do is do a better identification of both the predators and the victims.

I showed -- I met with my deputy commissioner last week, and we talked about that. And if I could just -- just give me one minute to indulge this, I want to explain to you how we do it now.

When we get a list of who's coming in from court or who's coming in from the street, we get their name. We run a computer form called the RT 50 before they ever get to the facility. This is what it tells us: gives us a name, gives us a race, Social Security number, the first date this person
was incarcerated, the date of the latest incarceration.

It tells us next of kin information. It says "Special Management." That would be drugs, if they have a drug problem, or diabetes or a medical problem, it goes under Special Management. It keys us to that.

Down further there's another one that says "Profile." And it could say "Latin king," it could say "naeta," it could say "20 love" if they were an active member of a street gang. It could also just say "profile."

That keys us when it just says "Profile" to run another form called a 42, which gives me their history. That form will tell me that that person has been a predator in jail based on a discipline -- or a victim in jail, based -- it will be in there.

It will also tell me things like he testified against his codefendant, don't house him with so and so, so things like that. He was assaulted by so and so at this facility, don't house them together. Those are the things.

Obviously they don't want everybody to have access to that, but the system fails in this way.
room now -- and I was an AP officer for years.

We're so busy, and now with -- I think it was the Ninth Circuit decision on the strip searches on misdemeanor people, we've added another piece to it where we can't strip the misdemeanors coming in. So we got to be careful there. We're looking not to get sued on that.

So we're very busy. With every facility that we have, we have inmates on the floor in the gym. So trying to house everybody in a perfect place is difficult at this point because we don't have the room.

But if that 50 that everybody's got in their hand, that first form that we ran under "Profile," if it said "Housing" -- that's all it has to say. It doesn't have to say victim, predator -- just says "Housing," that keys me that I have to run this second form. I have to run it.

Because right now if it just says "Profile," we can't get done what we need to get done in an eight-hour shift. It's impossible to do the things that we're directed to do. So the profile doesn't get run until the person gets to a unit and a counselor or treatment officer looks at them.
That's a flaw. I can end up housing a predator with somebody who is slight, whose body weight is nowhere near theirs, who has been a victim before. Possibilities are unlimited.

We say it doesn't cost you any money, profile, housing. Now, it keys you. You have to check this. I brought that up last week. We'll see what they do with it.

We're looking at other things that don't cost money. We're looking at -- and this is the agency's proactive on -- I have to give them credit. They're proactive on this. We're looking at housing people by body stature in a lot of cases when we can.

We're looking and saying, this guy's 250, and he's an inmate for us with a five-digit number. That means he's been doing this since the '60s or '70s. The kid that we're going to put him in with is 130 pounds. It's his first time in jail for DWI. Doesn't pass the common sense test.

So we're looking now and the agency's doing that to try and house people by body stature. We think that that, again, will help.

The assessment unit we've started, started as a result of inmate suicide, and that has also
helped with sexual assault.

We do 15-minute tours in assessment units.

I listened to people yesterday talking about one-hour tours. In our normal minimum security units we do half-hour tours.

But in all of our assessment units, in all protective custody units, in all gang units we do 15-minute tours. The youth facility's all 15-minute tours. That helps tremendously.

I also need to make sure you know -- you don't want to talk too much about money, but you need to understand this. When I started doing this job, I was in a dormitory with 76 inmates and myself and one other officer. And these were presentenced inmates anywhere from murder to DWI.

Today that same dorm has 114 inmates in it, not 76. And it has one officer. And so that's part of the problem. There's no way around that not being part of the problem.

I wanted to talk about our problem with reporting and investigation.

Our reporting goes like this. I'm the correction officer. They're not going to talk to me. They're not going to talk to me because they don't want other inmates seeing them talk to me.
There's almost an unwritten rule in a lot of the jails, you don't talk to the correction officer in some hours.

But if he's a victim and he comes to the desk and talks to me, it keys people, so he doesn't do it.

What normally happens is when he goes to chow, he grabs the lieutenant in the chow hall, a supervisor. Or when the lieutenant makes the rounds in the dorm, he grabs the lieutenant because he knows the lieutenant is going to get him out of there.

Now, I'm not sure that that's the first place we ought to start, is with a custody supervisor. I almost wonder sometimes if we should turn them over to medical right now or to some kind of clinician right now before we do anything.

Again, problem with that is most of our facilities don't have 24-hour medical. Most of them don't have medical on the weekends.

One of the grossest things is that if I'm at Gates Correctional Institute and I get raped, they got to put me in a van and drive me 20 minutes to medical at another facility. When I get there, if they decide they need a rape kit, they're going
to put me in a van and drive me another hour to the contracted healthcare place.

So if I have been traumatized like this, I'm now going to make all these trips, lay handcuffed in leg irons to get to a hospital. And this is a result, again, of us having to cut back on medical and taking 24-hour medical out of the facilities and having to move.

I wonder if we ought not be doing rape kits on scene. Again, it's cost, but -- or at local emergency rooms. That would be one trip instead of two.

Our investigations are done by folks who come up through the ranks. They're captains who yesterday were in a correctional setting as a supervisor, as a manager, and get -- they go to what we call Security Division, which is our Internal Affairs.

They show up there the next day, and they're now an investigator. There's no syllabus. There's no continuum.

I talked to four investigators that I know, off the record, during this last week or two, and they swear that they're not steered by senior management on investigations and how they should
come out. And these are four people that I believe, and I believe they're telling me the truth. The perception of the folks that I represent is way different than that. It's that they come to a conclusion, and they write an investigation to support the conclusion, that senior management gives them a conclusion and they write an investigation.

I would tell you the inmates will probably tell you the same thing.

So there's not a lot of respect for those folks, and some of them are friends of mine. But there's not a lot of respect for their investigatory technique.

We think -- and, again, I'm not looking for a civilian review board. That to us is almost a double-edged sword. I want somebody who knows the environment, who understands what happens in the environment. But we need people that are professionally trained. We need people -- detectives that can detect.

And I would tell you that that -- I think that that's our weakest point right now in the process is that investigation.

All sexual assaults in prisons in the state
of Connecticut are turned over to Connecticut state
police. That's who does them.

And I think that that's a good idea. It's
an outside agency from us. They look at it. The
problem with them is the jail stuff doesn't take a
high priority for them. Okay. So because -- and
they are, they're busy. They got a whole lot of
other things going on.

I still think that, all of that being said,
that we're better off with them doing it than we are
with what we've got now.

They've got an agreement. And I checked to
see if it had anything to do with Garrity, and they
tell me it doesn't. It's just an agreement with the
state police that the security division won't get
into it administratively until the state police are
done.

So you don't have two parallel
investigations going. You got the state police
doing one, which may take a year, nine months, six
months. And at the end of that, if the state police
say there's no criminality here, we're not going to
prosecute it, now I got to start an administrative
investigation on something that's over a year old.

So that system -- and I would tell you that
we get hurt as much by that as we get helped by it.
Okay. It hurts us as much. People talked about
having people sent home. We have people sent home.
In my testimony I talked about a warden --
a warden named Mike Lajoy (phonetic) that's at one
of our maximum security facilities down in
Connecticut.
He -- we had a 19-year-old female -- a
19-year female counselor who worked at that
facility. She had an exemplary record. She was a
professional and well respected. An inmate made an
accusation that she was sexually aggressive towards
him.
It was devastating. I mean, her husband
finds out about it. You talked about the
confidentiality. Her husband finds out about it.
The whole jail's talking about it. There's no
secrets in jail. You can say what you want about
the confidentiality, you know.
If some inmate goes up there and says he
was raped, everybody knows in ten minutes. It's
just the way it is. If I go up there and say my
mother's sick, they all know in ten minutes. It's
jail. No secrets.
This kid -- it wasn't found -- the
allegation wasn't found to not be able to be substantiated; the allegation was found to be false, that he didn't, that it never happened. And this warden had that inmate arrested for making a false statement.

Nothing will happen, and we don't care if anything happens, but it made a statement. And we think it's an important statement.

Our people are held to a high standard, and we should be. And inmates are responsible for their behavior. And when they falsely accuse one of us, they should be arrested and prosecuted.

I would tell you that we see a disparity in the treatment of officers.

And, again, I could just tell you my experience with it. We've had -- at the women's facility and at other facilities we've had over the last 12 years numerous, probably a dozen, maybe 15 sexual assault staff stuff on inmate at the women's facility.

We had a deputy warden that was incarcerated for -- convicted and incarcerated. We had a captain, a lieutenant, three or four officers that were incarcerated as a result of that. I got no problem with that.
Female officers don't get incarcerated when they get caught. They don't get prosecuted and found guilty. And I'm not trying to blame the agency.

Let me tell you what happens. We can't get a male inmate to testify that he was sexually assaulted by a female officer. They won't do it. So we don't have somebody to come in and testify that this person assaulted him.

So my members look at it and say, ah, yeah, that's the way it is, they let the females alone, and they prosecute the men and put them in jail. That causes us a lot of problems when I try and explain that away.

I had some recommendations, and I will shut up. We need to do this profile thing that I talked about, and I'm going to work with the deputy commissioner to try and get that done so we've got them pegged. Everywhere they go, we know who they are and we know what they've done. And, also, the victims, we want the victims pegged so we can house them properly.

You know, again, you guys yesterday asked not to talk about money too much. We think we need to staff these places. The places are the county
jails, the youth facility, and the women's facility. They need to be staffed different than normal prisons. These are where it happens.

Our county jails, which we're unique that corrections runs the county jails in Connecticut, one of the few states that does that. The county jails are where the high sexual assault rate is, the women's prison's a high sexual assault rate, and I believe that the youth facility is a high sexual assault rate. We need to staff those places differently than we staff the other places. That's money, and I don't think obviously it...

The training. I think the training is good, but I will tell you that I polled 20 correction officers last week. Two of them knew what PREA was. The other 18 had no clue. So obviously we need to intensify the training. I think it's important that we do a different module for folks that work in the high-risk facilities than the one that we do for everybody. I think that that's important. I also find totally unacceptable that we have a women's facility that the latest edition was built in 1993. It's a combination of a maximum security-celled unit and some old cottages that were
known as the "women's farm" in the early 1900s. And
that's kind of what we've got.

And there's both sides: One's a lockdown
compound, and the other side is roam free. We don't
have any cameras in there. There's only two
facilities in our state that don't have cameras out
of 19. One of them is the women's facility.

The agency has asked for bonding. But to
have that place where you've got this high risk for
sexual assault -- I shouldn't say high risk. It's
higher there than it is anywhere else -- and not
have the cameras is just absolutely unacceptable.

I would tell you that, you know, unions --
usually you don't see us jumping up and down, asking
for cameras. But I would tell you that those
cameras in that women's facility would be as good
for us as they are for the inmates. They would show
the false accusations for us. And we think that
that is horrible that we don't have that. Again,
they're trying to bond it.

We also -- and, finally, I think that we
need to have a better investigatory agency within
the department that does administrative
investigations. I would tell you that I put on the
cases at arbitration, and we beat the hell out of
them at arbitration because of their poor investigations.

Thank you for inviting me. It's been a pleasure. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN WALTON: Thank you very much for your testimony, Mr. Meyers.

Mr. Harrison, you were the lead investigator, as I understand, in the case that's known out here as the "Booty Bandit" case.

And can you tell us about the investigation of that case, what was done right, what may have been done wrong, why there were problems? I know there was ultimately an acquittal of the correctional officers who were charged, but can you give us some insight as to that situation and any other that you want to relate to us regarding the investigation of these type of cases?

MR. JOHN HARRISON: Yes, sir.

And thanks, again, for inviting me to testify today.

Again, my name is John Harrison. I am a special agent, and I am employed by the California Department of Corrections. I am assigned to the Redding Police Department in Redding, California, to a street crimes unit right now.