

My name is Wade Laszlo. I am a PERA Correctional Plan Retiree. I worked as a Hennepin County Detention Deputy from 1990-2016, for over 20 years of that time I was a Union Steward first with Teamsters Local 320 then MNPEA.

I am opposed to adding 911 Dispatchers to the PERA Correctional Plan, especially crediting past service.

I was part of the original group of Corrections Officers from multiple Unions that got together to form the PERA Correctional Plan in the late 90's. We were opposed by Police and Fire, the MPPOA and many others.

We had to prove high levels of injury, exposure to disease and assault. The pension was based on 95% inmate contact, direct supervision of inmates and security and control of the institution.

Over the years I witnessed assaults on staff resulting in broken bones, bites, assaults with urine and feces thrown on Detention Deputies, sucker punches, and even Detention Deputies being choked. I witnessed numerous Detention Deputies being sent to the hospital often by ambulance. In 2012 Hennepin County Detention Sergeant Brad Berntson was bit by an inmate with AIDS, He was put on antiviral medications to keep from getting HIV. He died of the side effects from those medications.

In the late 90's a sergeant and I performed CPR on an inmate with AIDS and revived him. He projectile vomited on us and it was treated as an exposure. We were sent to Fairview Hospital where they froze our blood as a baseline in case we came down with HIV at a later date.

In 2006 the Minnesota Legislature passed the Blood Born Pathogens Bill, MSS 241.336. This Bill allows the forced blood draw of inmates who expose Corrections Officers to blood and body fluids and refuse to give a sample. It was a measure to keep CO's from starting antivirals and having to take precautions around family worrying about contracting HIV. Dispatchers need no such protection.

I am aware of Detention Deputies who contracted TB from inmates and there was a very large outbreak of TB among Detention staff at the Ramsey County jail some years ago. Most recently large numbers of Detention Deputies caught covid because of direct contact with inmates.

Dispatchers sit in a safe controlled environment with none of these dangers. They do not fit the PERA Correctional Plan definition.

Once the 55 retirement was secured in 1999 we were not allowed to credit past service. I left 9 years in the General Plan. It takes 5 years for a Detention Deputy/CO to be 50% vested and 10 years to be fully vested in the PERA Correctional Plan. Dispatchers want to transfer past credit! If this were ever allowed all of us who left time in the General Plan need to be credited.

No Actuarial has been done on how much it will cost to add 911 Dispatchers to the PERA Correctional Plan. Several Actuarials were done before forming the PERA Correctional Plan. Doug Anderson, Executive Director of PERA has estimated it could cost as much as \$79 million, but this is just an estimate. No one knows the actual cost or damage it would do to the health of the PERA Correctional Plan.

I am not opposed to 911 Dispatchers having a better retirement. I believe the best option would be to eliminate the early retirement penalty in their current plan and adjust employee and employer contributions to adjust. They do not belong in the PERA Correctional Plan.

Wade Laszlo

Retired Hennepin County Detention Deputy
1990-2016