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**For Immediate Release**



## **Negotiations Between Correctional And State Break Down**

**PROVIDENCE, RI** (Mar 1, 2006) Negotiations between the union representing the state's more than 13,000 correctional officers and other corrections professionals and the state have broken down after nearly three years of negotiations - the last six months in mediation.

The sides remain far apart on numerous issues, mainly pay, concessions, and length of term.

"We have bargained in good faith for nearly three years, and the state continues to try to impose conditions that are inconsistent with settlements of other state unions," said Richard Ferruccio, President of the Rhode Island Brotherhood of Correctional Officers. "Our members have gone without pay raises for nearly four years."

"We are prepared to take whatever action is necessary to assure fair and equitable treatment of our members," Ferruccio said.

During the long negotiations, corrections officers' pay has fallen far behind that of other security personnel. Traditionally, corrections officers' pay has been three pay grades ahead of Deputy Sheriffs, in recognition of the increased stress and demands on correctional officers. Currently, Deputy Sheriffs, have leapfrogged corrections officers; winning a six-pay grade increase to where they are now three pay grades ahead of

corrections officers. In addition the state is demanding that, in arbitration, RIBCO agrees not to demand anything more than equal pay with Deputy Sheriffs.

“We recognize the good work done by Deputy Sheriffs, but it does not carry the same stress and dangers of correctional officers and professionals,” Ferruccio said. “Corrections officers’ pay was greater than that of Deputy Sheriffs for good reason and in recognition of the added stress and danger. Deputy Sheriffs work a traditional Monday through Friday week. Corrections professionals work round the clock, seven days a week.

“Our correctional officers are well qualified, dedicated and carry out their duties professionally,” Ferruccio said. “Yet they are paid well below their counterparts in Massachusetts and Connecticut.”

Other significant issues include:

- In arbitration the state wants RIBCO to limit its demands to wages only, but open arbitration for the state to several items, including setting sick pay at only 60 percent of a corrections professional’s daily pay, limiting overtime for those working in excess of 16 hours straight, and reducing holiday pay.
- Requiring officers assigned to the Reintegration Unit, when it opens next year, to 12-hour shifts at regular pay.
- Establishing a different standard for health payments for longevity pay than other state employees, effectually reducing the correctional officers overall pay.

RIBCO and the state are still awaiting a decision from the state Superior Court as to which arbitration statute applies to these negotiations. RIBCO contends that current negotiations are subject to full binding arbitration, under the 2004 Correctional Officers Arbitration Act.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

**Mission:**

The members of the Rhode Island Brotherhood of Correctional Officers are bound together into a Brotherhood for mutual interest, protection, welfare, and advancement. Through the Brotherhood, its members and their families receive moral, intellectual, social, and economic benefits. The Brotherhood cultivates friendships of fraternity, and fosters and encourages the highest degree of skill, efficiency, discipline, and loyalty among the corrections professionals for the State of Rhode Island.

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