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Patrick Moran - President

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**Testimony**  
**HB 763 – Correctional Officers' Retirement System - Membership**  
**Pensions/Appropriations**  
**February 17, 2022**  
**Support with Amendments**

AFSCME Council 3 strongly supports HB 763. This legislation, with amendment, would add the Department of Juvenile Services' Case Management Specialists I, II, III, Supervisor, Program Supervisor, and Group Life Managers I and II to the Correctional Officers Retirement System (CORS). We seek a friendly amendment due to a mix up during the bill drafting process.

Chapter 580 of the Laws of 2018 added a number of DJS and Department of Public Safety and Corrections (DPSCS) job titles to the Correctional Officers' 20-year retirement system. Unfortunately, these titles were left out of this eligibility.

The 20-year retirement system exists to recognize that the stresses of this employment contribute to a shorter life span. For example, while DJS Case Management Specialists may sound like a management job, they are actually the Parole and Probation (P&P) Agents for the juvenile clientele. While serving a different population, DJS Case Managers' daily activities, required skills, licensing and training are similar. P&P Agents are in the Correctional Retirement System (CORS), while DJS Case Management Specialists are not.

Case Management Specialists visit juvenile offenders in their homes and communities. This population may have issues with impulse control and high levels of gang activity. As a result, this younger population can make DJS Case Managers vulnerable to unpredictable dangers.

Their duties and responsibilities often require them to work evenings and weekends, traveling throughout the state to engage with clients, families, the courts, law enforcement and juvenile residential facilities. They need to both monitor and engage their young clients, create compliance plans and coordinate and execute those plans, often serving as a liaison to other stakeholders and community organizations.

Adding these job titles to CORS should *assist* – not *deter* – in recruitment and retention for a position that is often difficult to hire. We thank Delegates Bridges and Wells for their efforts on this legislation, and ask for a favorable report.

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An employee has the right to a union representative if requested by the employee.  
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**TESTIMONY – Correctional Officers' Retirement System - Membership Pensions/Budget &**

**Taxation**

**February 14, 2022**

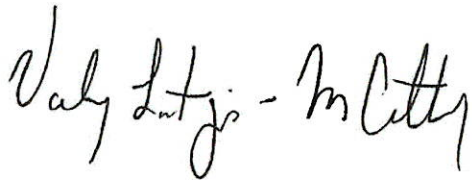
**Support with Amendments**

Hello Madam Chair and members of this committee. I am thankful for this opportunity to share my testimonial concerning my commitment working as a Case Management Specialist for the Department of Juvenile Service and the request for the Correctional Officers' Retirement System.

My name is Valery Latgis-McCarthy, and I am a Case Management Specialist III and I have worked for the Department of Juvenile Services for over seventeen years. I am also a proud member of AFSCME Local 3. I as college graduate, I wanted to help others and I found that opportunity working at a facility for at-risk juvenile boys. In fact, our roles go far beyond just touching the lives of our youth; we touch youth's families and their communities. However, there are so many barriers we encounter every day. Our youth are with us during their darkest and most challenging parts of their lives. Many of our youth have experienced trauma, behavioral health concerns, gang issues, and family concerns. I have celebrated with youth that graduated from school or a GED program to crying with youth over the murder of a love one. We not only manage our caseloads in all legal matters just like correctional Case Management Specialist does but we also communicate with parents, teach social skills classes, counsel youth, and assist our youth in becoming positive and productive members of our communities. I firmly

believe in investing in our youth. However, our youth have deep scars from the dangerous streets, which can spill over in our youth's responses to stressful situations. Youth can become very aggressive and dangerous toward other youth and or staff. As a CPM certified staff in DJS approved restraints, I am in harmful situations in order to balance a healthy and safe environment for all. I experienced a youth spitting in my eye, a youth banging a door in my face that chipped my tooth, threatened several times, and many cuts and bruises from physically restraining youth over the seventeen years of my service. As an individual that cares for the welfare and progress of our youth, I like the other Case Management Specialists, continue to support and guide our youth through their setbacks. Now in a world with Covid-19, it has exponentially added additional guidelines and expectations to an already thinning of Case Management Specialist staffing. By allowing Case Management Specialist to enroll in the twenty year Correctional Retirement System, would allow for retention in this stressful and hazardous role.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Valery Latgis - McCarthy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Valery Latgis-McCarthy

February 14, 2022

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**Support with Amendments**

Hello Madam Chair and members of this committee. I appreciate you taking the time to hear me out today. My name is Maritta Lee, and I am a Case Management Specialist III for the Department of Juvenile Services. I am also a proud member of AFSCME Council 3. I have worked for the Department of Juvenile Services for 21 years.

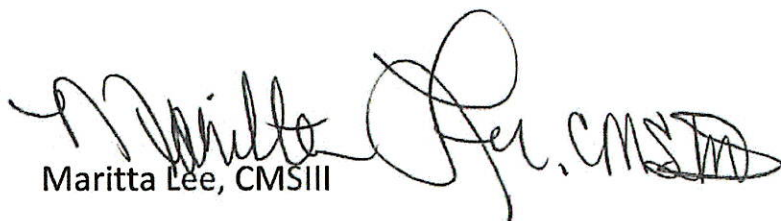
My career as a Case Manager for at risk youth has been challenging, yet rewarding. As a Case Manager I am responsible for these youth on a daily basis having to support and assist with court hearings, education, family involvement and facilitating classes that teach Social Skills, Anger Control Skills, and Moral Reasoning Skills. Most of the at-risk youth we are working for have serious mental health issues that are stemming from multiple traumas that happened in their lives. Case Management Specialists have heavy caseloads, and work long endless hours on those caseloads to ensure the youth are receiving the proper services in order to return as a successful member of their community. We are leading, guiding, and directing these at-risk youth on a daily basis.

DJS Case Management Specialists, and Parole and Probation officers receive the same training, and require the same education. I believe that DJS Case Managers are tasked with greater responsibilities for engaging at-risk youth as we are leading and guiding

them to make better choices/decisions that deter them from adult charges and ultimately jail/prison.

Madam Chair and Members of this committee, I ask that you please support this bill (20 year retirement for Case Management Specialists) as we are losing good employees to other agencies that offer 20 year retirement, with smaller caseloads and less responsibility. The most important challenge as Case Management Specialist is to establish rapport and trust with at risk youth. This is hard to do when staffing is inconsistent. Also, let's not forget the current pandemic and the challenges it has presented for Case Management Specialists to adequately do their job.

Thank You,

  
Maritta Lee, CMSIII