

TESTIMONY

Senate Corrections Subcommittee

May 21

Christina Minney

Christina Minney
1316 Main St.
Richmond Dale, OH 45673
740-649-0745
paul_chris88@yahoo.com

Thank you Chairman Uecker and members of the Senate Corrections Subcommittee. My name is Christina Minney and I work as a Correction Officer at the Ross Correctional Institution in Chillicothe, Ohio.

I am speaking before you today on behalf of the Ohio Civil Service Employees Association to talk about our efforts to save the State of Ohio money and to return safety and cleanliness to Ohio's correctional food service.

I, along with several of my Correction sisters and brothers from DR&C and DYS across the state, served directly on the OCSEA food service committee.

On February 23, 2015, that committee of my peers presented to DR&C a proposal to bring correctional food service back under state operation. This proposal reduces DR&C per-meal price to \$1.216—versus Aramark's \$1.275. This would save the department \$2.9 million per year, while restoring security and budgeting for a plan to clean up the institutions in the wake of Aramark's problems.

Additionally, OCSEA's proposal presented a revenue generation pilot program that would produce an additional \$1.6 million in its first year, reducing DR&C's per meal cost even further to \$1.18 per meal.

What would returning prison food service back to state operation mean for Ohioans? *First, and most importantly, it would mean more secure prisons and food service system.*

OCSEA's proposal restores over 400 security personnel. They will be trained, just as before, at the Corrections Training Academy in security procedures and so on. Aramark does not currently have the

TESTIMONY

Senate Corrections Subcommittee

May 21

Christina Minney

trained security staff to deal with the difficult operational environment of our prisons, which is putting a serious burden on DR&C, its resources, and its security staff.

On top of this, Aramark has had a chronic problem with understaffing—an issue for which they have been fined more than \$270,000. At one institution for instance, the kitchen requires 14 staff to operate, the number contractually required by DR&C. But even today Aramark continues to run their kitchens with as few as eight staff members at a time.

Due to lack of security, food outages, inmate complaints, high turnover of Aramark staff, and Aramark staff relationships with inmates, institutions have been forced to shift security staff into food service. On the ground, this means all available staff are being deployed to food service—and away from watching the yard, housing units, inmate movement, etc. For instance, one warden stated on Sept. 29 of last year—quote, “my staff are spending more time in CFS (Correctional Food Service) than any other area”—unquote.

And yet this still isn't enough. A Correctional Institution Inspection Committee report from March 6 this year, states that the Ohio Reformatory for Women needs to deploy *additional* executive staff for oversight of food service operations. And CIIC's Trumbull Inspection report indicates similar needs. Aramark is pulling staff resources from security for institutions statewide. None of this was considered when DR&C contracted food service.

But OCSEA's proposal solves these problems. Our proposal would restore security training to food service positions—the same training a CO receives, except for firearms training. This means that all the COs, sergeants, captains, and lieutenants that have been “spending more time in food service,” to quote the warden, will be able to go back to ensuring safety in all the other parts of the institutions. Food service workers will be trained like COs, which will mean our prisons will be safer and more secure. Retention and recruitment rates will be higher due to the better pay and benefits and the state will have employees with a real dedication to the job.

TESTIMONY

Senate Corrections Subcommittee

May 21

Christina Minney

What else would returning prison food service into public hands mean for Ohioans? *It would mean a cleaner, more sanitary program.*

OCSEA has crafted a program to clean up Aramark's issues in the institutions. All food service workers will be ServSafe certified under OCSEA's proposal.

Currently, Aramark has only a few managers who have received the certification, and, more often than not, Aramark runs shifts without anyone at all in the kitchen with food safety certification.

We've all heard about the problems Aramark has created with maggots in food and so on, and I'm hoping that you've seen the CIIC and food service monitor reports that cite how filthy Aramark has allowed the kitchens to become. To ensure we clean up these issues, OCSEA has proposed to retain the monitor positions created by DR&C to oversee the Aramark contract. These additional positions will be dedicated to creating and maintaining a higher standard of cleanliness than Aramark has ever been able to attain.

Finally, what else would returning food service to OCSEA members mean for Ohioans? *Cost-savings!*

OCSEA has gone above and beyond the Aramark proposal, producing millions in savings, offering more transparency, *and* flexibility for additional changes. We have been in contact with DR&C throughout the process and have made it clear that our proposal is open to amendment to meet the agency's needs. This can't exactly be said about the Aramark's contract—which has only been expensive, rigid, and inadequate. Ohio taxpayers deserve something better, and OCSEA's plan is just that—better!

Thank you for your time, Senators.

I will now entertain your questions if you have any.