

Dept. of Corrections: Sec. Carr statement on State Worker Compensation Plan action taken by JCOER

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Madison, Wis. – Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) Secretary Kevin Carr issued the following statement regarding action taken Tuesday by the legislature's Joint Committee on Employment Relations on the State Employee Compensation Plan:

"I am disappointed in the Joint Committee on Employment Relations' decision to pass on approving the Governor's full compensation plan with accompanying companion legislation, which could have provided meaningful, long-term relief to the competitive pay and staffing issues at Wisconsin DOC. I find their lack of vision, and support for our agency and its employees absolutely stunning.

Since I became Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Corrections, I've advocated for higher wages for many jobs in this agency, which has faced steadily rising staff vacancy rates since 2010. The current economy has exacerbated our staffing problems in many job classifications, including security staff in our institutions. Our correctional officers and sergeants perform a public safety function in a dangerous environment and are currently forced to work multiple 16-hour days a week, which is physically, mentally and emotionally draining.

The legislature was instrumental in creating the staffing crisis facing Wisconsin DOC. Staffing vacancies were at a two-decade low in 2009, and vacancy rates have been steadily rising since. The Governor gave the legislature a chance to also be part of the solution, but they instead once again refused to provide sustainable,

long-term support to our department and our staff.

We continue to believe the correct path to take to fund long-term investments in corrections is through general purpose revenue, which will not expire. Today's action doesn't solve the long-term competitive pay problems facing DOC. The action of the committee today is short-sighted and insufficient."