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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SUBJECT: AFSCME Wisconsin Statement on Department of Corrections Oversight of Prairie Du Chien Correctional Institution Employee Scheduling Change

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In recent years, the Wisconsin Department of Corrections has struggled to address a staffing crisis endured daily by devoted correctional officers across Wisconsin. A lone bright spot, even under the Walker administration, is Prairie Du Chien Correctional Institution (PDCI) where overtime and staff turnover are low, due in part to the current pro-worker schedule. Under the management of Deputy Warden Kevin Semanko, PDCI is poised to overhaul the current scheduling system which benefits workers, management, and taxpayers. This ill-advised decision was made without truly conferring with employees and trusting their expertise.

AFSCME Wisconsin Interim Executive Director Patrick Wycoff explained, “this staffing change is unnecessary and absurd. This overhaul is change for the sake of change which achieves nothing other than making workers feel more isolated, undervalued, and voiceless. On April 29th, PDCI employees presented a petition to DOC leadership demanding that management meet with employees and discuss the ramifications of this shortsighted plan. This petition was signed by an astounding 70% of PDCI correctional officers within two days.”

In late 2018, PDCI management met twice with employees serving on a so-called “scheduling committee,” however the schedule overhaul was never discussed by management in their meetings. Subsequently, employees expressed that they feel blindsided by the scheduling decision.

Wycoff continued, “if the schedule change was as necessary as the DOC says, why did management refrain from addressing it when they met with employees? The DOC keeps ignoring workers’ steady requests to be respected and employees are rightfully fed up. Workers stated they’re willing to discuss all options, but they need management to sincerely listen. DOC Secretary Carr has repeatedly acknowledged that employees may feel undervalued and assured us in good faith that their administration cares about workers’ experiences. It turns out that Secretary Carr wasn’t operating in good faith, after all.”

For more information, please contact Valerie Landowski (vlandowski@afscme32.org)

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