

# Lock Talk



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## Corrections braves the weather to greet McGuinty

The cold, wet and grey weather did not deter members of the Corrections Division as they paid a visit to Liberal Leader Dalton McGuinty's fundraiser in Ottawa on May 28, 2009.

The weather provided a suitable backdrop that mirrored the treatment of the Corrections Division both during negotiations and following the contract ratification.

Dozens of hardy members from both the community and institutions attended the event to bring attention to the deplorable working conditions and lack of human and financial resources that exist at the ground level of Corrections in Ontario.

While members were peacefully demonstrating on the information picket line, Brothers Gord Longhi and Eduardo Almeida were able to conduct an inside lobby of the actual event.

Given that this was the Premier's fundraiser, there were many MPPs on site. Gord and Eddy had the opportunity to address a number of Ottawa and area MPPs and explain that although the Corrections Division may have a contract, significant steps would still be necessary to get labour relations back to some semblance of stability.

Brothers Longhi and Almeida had an opportunity to spend a few moments with the busy Premier and explained to him that neither he nor his ministers are being given all the facts about what is happening in the correctional

institutions and community offices. McGuinty was told that his senior management group is so disconnected with what is happening on the shop floors, that when they report on issues they give finely filtered information to suit their own needs, not the needs of the actual ministry or what would best suit community safety.

Although the time was brief, Premier McGuinty was advised that senior bureaucrats within MCSCS have violated signed agreements and retracted verbal promises on such a scale that signed documents are now seemingly not worth the paper they are written on. "So what's next?" we asked. "Tear up the collective agreement?"

The Premier thanked OPSEU for supporting his fundraiser and asked for a summary of what is happening in Corrections so he can review our concerns. McGuinty wants to know what the workers are seeing as issues on the front lines from both community and institutions.

We ask that members forward their thoughts to their local executives and the MERC Chair.

We also informed the Premier that we would provide a synopsis for him and all the MPPs as the issue was relevant to almost every community and constituency in Ontario. We look forward to speaking with the Premier and Liberal MPPs once again throughout the summer.

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## Parties agree to normalize labour relations

In an effort to improve labour relations, the employer and union met and have agreed to work more cooperatively toward solving issues that have been plaguing Corrections for a number of months.

To that end, the union has signed an agreement that will allow all locals to rescind all notices recently served to their local superintendents, and we encourage them to do so.

The employer has also agreed to accept the locals' intent to rescind their notices of withdrawal from Compressed Work Week Agreements.

Members are encouraged to make themselves reasonably available for HPRO and participate in all activities within their workplaces, including acting assignments. Management has assured us that they will be looking into all management vacancies with intent to fill all vacant positions.

The MERC has also agreed to a Terms of Reference with respect to a Security Provisions and Inmate Population Management Committee. This committee is being formed to make recommendations concerning current security provisions at provincial correctional facilities and the management of inmate populations within those institutions.

Corrections MERC Chair Eddy Almeida is "cautiously optimistic" that the Division can move forward on its concerns.

"We have agreed with the employer that it is in everyone's best interest to try to normalize labour relations in Corrections," Almeida said. "However, it takes two parties to make this work. We will certainly do our part."

Authorized for distribution:



Warren (Smokey) Thomas, President



Eddy Almeida, MCSCS MERC Chair