



ILLINOIS CORRECTIONS LODGE # 263  
**FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE**  
4341 ACER GROVE, # B SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, 62711

1/1/2024

As we begin 2024 with all of our **Hopes, Dreams, and Ambitions** in full gear, let us take a moment to take a glimpse at 2023. I have been very busy across the state meeting with and talking to Legislators, on both sides, as well as Nationally, building awareness and support of Corrections and the issues we are faced with. The numbers don't lie!!!

- \*Increased Staff Assaults
- \*Synthetic Drug Exposures/Narcan
- \*Mental Health Issues (including suicides)
- \*Lack of Offender Accountability (Reduction in Restrictive Housing)
- \*Staff Shortages
- \*Mandates and Forced Overtime
- \*RETIREE LE Carry

This is what I have heard or read from the members who have reached out to me through various forms of communication. I have taken these messages to our Lodge 263 Executive Board and the Statewide Corrections Committee, and we have been tasked with how we can best combat these issues.

This is a TEAM of people who truly care about ALL of Corrections. We, your Lodge E-Board decided to attack these issues head on.

Some of this requires and will continue to require: time, and resources, including financial resources (to support lobbying efforts). Others will involve YOU the MEMBER to take some ACTION!

So, let's get started with Assaults...

Some of these outcomes possibly could have been avoided with something as simple as speaking to someone properly from the beginning.

Others it wouldn't matter what you did, they had it set in their mind that someone that day was going to get assaulted.

As we all know your facility I/A Department should be forwarding this up to your local States Attorney (not placing the blame on the I/A office, as they take direction). If this is not happening now, then with your help in doing it yourself we know it will be done and more attention needs to be brought forward regarding this issue.

[ILFOP263.COM](http://ILFOP263.COM)

I encourage each member who may be that unlucky Officer, who is assaulted/battered by an offender to go follow up with IA and ensure your criminal case is being filed with the local States Attorney. If in fact it is then follow up with the States Attorney office to ensure they are doing their part, follow through and offer any assistance or any additional information/testimony that may be needed to charge and get a conviction of the offender. They may decline perusing your case criminally, this is why the civil remedy may be the best option to go.

Attached in this envelope you will find a sample format on how to take the steps to properly charge/sue an offender who has assaulted you the Officer. The purpose is to show members the proper forms and format to file charges/sue an offender through your local States Attorneys' Office.

It is suggested that you start making a log of the date it was filed, along with all the supportive documentation you have on the case. It is our hope that they will take the case. If not then reach out yourself to them and ask why, then send us all of the info you have on the case, and we will attempt with our resources as well.

The hope is that they try your case and you win and the offenders start receiving some added time, as well as any monetary damages you may receive. At minimum it is believed that it will have the States Attorneys across the State asking questions surrounding why we have so many assaults occurring inside the jail/prison system, or why they are hearing about them by these means. Hopefully those inquiries will go to the Governor's office, Legislatures, and your Department/Agency.

Eventually the noise will become too loud to ignore, forcing some agencies to look at the current situation.

The situation shows a serious lack of concern for the Officers, and no accountability to offenders through reduced Segregation time and/or the watered down DR504/ disciplinary forced onto us by our Department. Their needs to be a serious look at policy change in regards to accountability, and it is hoped that this will help fast track change.

Synthetic Drugs... there is an alarming number of synthetic drugs that have infiltrated our Correctional Facilities.

As your FOP Lodge 263 President I have reached out to IDOC and the Governors' Office urging them both in writing and news media interviews to come to the table and find a solution to this growing cancerous issue.

Instead of being willing to come to the table and address the issue or taking any of the suggestions offered the Governor's office spokesperson responded by calling us racist, and that our problem was there's a female of color in charge of the Department.

The interesting fact is that, this very diverse E Board didn't know asking for paper mail to be scanned outside of the facility and sent in electronically for offenders to see and read was a racist statement. We are merely offering solutions for the sake of employees (and offenders).



So, we have decided to take a bill to legislation, making it mandatory for all Correctional agencies across the State to utilize a THZ 3D Scanning machine. Capable of detecting all drugs, including synthetic, and also other chemicals. This would be utilized on any type/form of paper mail being sent inside a Correctional Facility. This will combat the growing issue and make our workplaces safer.

Our plan is to get as many cosponsors as we can to help us fight this ongoing battle, and avoid the use of Narcan.

As many of you know who follow us on Social Media (which I urge you to do). ILFOP has a **GREAT Wellness Team** that is Nationally Certified. That Team includes several Lodge 263 Members. Because we have seen the changes in so many around us, it's clear we needed to help combat this issue.

Lodge 263 has had numerous suicides in the last few years, and if we can step up and be useful to someone, that's what this Lodge and Organization is all about. If you or your facility is in need, of any information regarding Mental Health reach out to Asst. Secretary Jennifer Ward @ [jenniferwardilfop263@gmail.com](mailto:jenniferwardilfop263@gmail.com) she is the Co-Chair for the Illinois FOP State Lodge, she will be happy to assist your needs. We also have an outstanding chaplaincy services with our Lodge as well Lodge 263 Secretary Ginny Campbell also serves in a dual role as our Lodge 263 chaplain, so if you are in need of any chaplaincy services please reach out to Ginny at [campbellginny4@gmail.com](mailto:campbellginny4@gmail.com) she has experience in this area and the ability to make great impact with those who she has contact with in this area.

Staff Shortages... seem to be all to common tone in any and all professions, especially Corrections/Law Enforcement.

This Lodge is working collaboratively with **"One Voice United"** an ALL Corrections Organization aimed at getting multiple Labor and Fraternal Organizations together across the Country to discuss/find a path that makes sense for our collective correctional issues. **They obtain funding from many large corporations, and have established research projects, to name one, the correlation between the Corrections Profession and Cardiac Issues. The research and project studies they are doing can be utilized to support legislative efforts and changes nation-wide that will benefit us, the Correctional Officer.**

Myself and VP McCluster attended a leadership working group that OVU hosted in Gettysburg PA, and it was a GREAT learning experience for everyone.

We had the opportunity to work on a project called "Next Generation" I brought back to Illinois, the complex format and tools that were taught for implementation in the Northern, Central, and Southern District Facilities.

The target was Officers with 1-5 years in the profession of Corrections and in a creative, thought provoking way it dissected their thoughts. What the profession is, why/how they chose it, and what would make them stay or go.



The Information gathered is then sent back to the organization by countless other Labor and Fraternal Organizations across the Country. To help provide data for ALL Correctional Law Enforcement Agencies to use as a learning tool to help bolster our professions support/treatment of Officers, and it's hiring process, hoping to help fill and retain staffing and alleviate vacancies, mandating and excessive overtime issues.

We felt that since we finally after decades, won the battle of carrying a weapon as Law Enforcement off duty with the **passage of HB4667**, that putting Corrections in this State, in line with Federal ALL other Law Enforcement entities, then we should have a Bill of Rights for Corrections, just as others do as well.

**(RETIREE UPDATE:** Since an issue with HB4667 relating to how/who the qualification process will go thru has not been resolved, this lodge is pushing forward through various avenues, one of which is filing a law suit against Sean Smoot (who is appointed by the Governor) and ILETSB.

We continue to work with SENATOR and LODGE 263 MEMBER Teri Bryant (R), as well as SENATE Minority Leader John Curran (R), and the original HB4667 Sponsor SENATOR Bill Cunningham (D), to FIND OR FORCE a solution to this RETIREE issue.

In addition, we are using those resources to contact JCAR, hoping they can bring the Governor's Office to mandate his appointees to FOLLOW THE LAW, that that was passed and put into effect. Please follow updates as we have them through our lodge email and social media formats.

**So last, but certainly not least is the very significant bill we plan to introduce.** I'm sure we will need to add some amendments along the way, but most important is to get it introduced and supported.

**The Correctional Officer Bill of Rights** will give us many rights that a simple departmental policy can't overturn and a Labor Contract can't negotiate away.

Examples that have been brought up and are open for discussion include but are not limited to:

\*Females being forced to strip search fully functioning males because they "identify as something else", or males being forced to strip out females. Both are bad policies and have privacy/prea written all over them.

\*Carrying a weapon off-duty for you and your family's protection.

\*Protective Vests at minimum for all staff leaving the facilities for any type of writ.

\*Body Cams for departmental agencies who actively have them in use now, and allowing the officers to see the video footage while report writing to ensure accuracy.

\*Agencies to develop a policy with their Labor Unions for officers' mental health purposes.

Which could include therapy sessions with a licensed therapist, or even days off if approved, if the situation warrants it.

\* State development of a bipartisan legislative panel that would receive a report of EVERY assault (both reportable incidents and the "newly created" incident summaries), that occur to both **STAFF and OFFENDER**. The panel would then send this information to the legislators who have Correctional Facilities within their districts minimally on a quarterly basis.



This kind of transparency for both staff and offender will bring the truth, to light.

The goal would be once the Legislators are advised of the mounding assaults within their districts, they will reach out supportively, to the Department or the Governor's office to look at the current policies or leadership that are in place and see if changes are in need for everyone's safety.

(Please remember this is a wish list of items that will be added to and revised, nothing is set in stone just making you aware as we navigate forward in getting a Corrections Bill of Rights passed.

**So, with all the items I just laid in front of you, hoping we can better assist and forcing some necessary changes in our profession. These take time, planning, and most importantly financial resources.**

You will be receiving an email from FOP Lodge 263 (Constant Contact is our membership wide system) in the next 7-10 days. This will be a survey link that **we as your E-Board would like your feedback and vote on.** The outcome from this survey will guide how this Lodge E-board moves forward with its coming plans. **IF you previously opted out/ unsubscribed from receiving these emails from FOP Lodge 263/Constant Contact, I urge you to respond to us opt back in email so you can take place in this quick survey and your voice can be heard.**

The Lodge only sends emails through this type of mass membership communication a few times a year.

It's the fastest and most cost-effective way to communicate with our membership, when it's important for us to reach you and educate you on rising issues.

Which in those instances I'm sure it's what you want from us, as well.

So again, I urge you to please open up our FOP Lodge 263 emails and read them.

These will be different from the Illinois State and National FOP emails, these directly affect you the Lodge 263 member.

Please also keep your contact information up to date, updating is done right on our Lodge website "MEMBER UPDATE" it is quick but important for you to receive mailings, emails a call/text and equally as important if your name changes do an update, do not chance being removed and interrupting your benefits specifically membership/Legal Defense because we don't know where you went or what your name now is. Also, this updates your BENEFICIARY, you do not want that "X" listed.

**As always, we appreciate each and every one of our members stretching across EVERY facility in this State.** Staying educated and informed is every members' best weapon. Sometimes that falls on you the member to reach out to your Facility Trustee/coordinator or District Trustee and let them know what's going on at your specific facility.



We can't help or offer support to you or your facility labor union if we are not informed on how you want or NEED our assistance. This is what we are here for, we a lot of ability and working collaboratively and focusing on issues for the members is how things get done or how awareness is raised.

Attached in this envelope as well is a form that will help you not only better understand how your facility may be a District, but it will also show you how our structure is formatted through our by-laws it will also give you a direct contact to your Trustee in an event you may need them. Your District trustee is who you should contact first with your information or ideas regarding your facility they are your direct voice.

You can trust it will be sent up the line to be discussed at our next E-Board meeting or by other means if the situation needs immediate attention.

**I would also like to THANK each and every person who has participated in helping us raise money for our Benevolent Fund.** Whether it's showing up at one of our Food Trailer Events or by simply purchasing one of our New Challenge Coins, or simply purchasing any of the wonderful items we have showcased on our Lodge 263 online store. All of these are great ways to help our members when they need it most. It's a great way to show appreciation by helping each other in their time of need. The money raised for this fund stays strictly with benevolent fund and distributed by a committee, it's not used for any other purpose in this lodge. Unfortunately, this year has seen a record number of in need from financial assistance to funeral flowers.

2023 was another Great year in regards to our Lodge 263 growth, especially in the Southern Region. We are Super Proud to have maintained over 2000+ members and growing stronger every month.

It not only shows that in the uncertainty of our job, Officers have gained knowledge of the **Legal Defense Benefit** you are automatically enrolled in and covered with Lodge 263 membership. Also, all the hard work and waves we have created, but it shows this E-Board and Statewide Correctional Officers Committee has done an outstanding job in communicating and working at finding ways to help everyone in our Lodge and profession.

I know you have heard it 100 times already, but anytime your address, email, or your phone # change. **Please log onto our website at ILFOP263.com and click on member updates, it's a quick and easy way to stay connected.** If we don't have your proper information, then you can't stay informed and you won't be able to receive your yearly letter from me or the Free gifts the Lodge sends with it 😊

(FYI your facilities do not inform us of any changes)

So please stay on top of that!!! FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO DO NOT HAVE FACEBOOK, OUR PAGE FEEDS DIRECTLY TO THE HOME PAGE OF OUR WEBSITE YOU CAN STAY IMMEDIATELY INFORMED THERE!

I would also like to include the 2024 Executive Board and general membership meetings. We do post them as events on our FB Page as well. I encourage any member who would like to come and hear what's going on and enjoy our Fraternalism, the dates are the following:

1<sup>st</sup> quarter E-Board meeting Saturday March 16<sup>th</sup>

2<sup>nd</sup> quarter E-Board meeting Saturday June 15<sup>th</sup>

3<sup>rd</sup> quarter E-Board meeting Saturday September 14<sup>th</sup>

4<sup>th</sup> quarter E-board meeting Saturday December 14<sup>th</sup>

All of our meetings are located at our Lodge office.

Illinois FOP State Lodge/Lodge 263 Office (Suite A Conference Room)

4341 Acer Grove

Springfield, Illinois, 62711

Our start time is always 10:00 am and the finish time will always vary based on our agenda for that quarter, but again any and all members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

I will conclude this letter to you by once again **THANKING YOU** the member for trusting in us as your Lodge 263 E-Board to continue working hard for our membership and profession.

We appreciate YOU and the **COUNTLESS HOURS OF HARD THANKLESS WORK** people do every single day. It may go unnoticed by your facility or supervisors, but I assure we at LODGE 263 Appreciate you! And our Retirees, you are so important to us, we have the ability to be involved with out the shift/days off or mandate restrictions that our active Officers have and we could not get things done without you! I appreciate the membership who has taken the time to get involved and participate in attending various meetings, trainings, conferences and committees when you are able.

Thank you again for allowing me to represent you as your FOP lodge 263 President, and also the State Lodge 2<sup>nd</sup> VP.

I urge you look over every attached paper included in this envelope mailer, so you can empower yourself with information and allow your voice or vote to be heard when needed. Sticking together is all we have in this profession if we want to continue being a success.

Fraternally,

Scot Ward, President

ILFOP Lodge 263

2<sup>nd</sup> VP IL FOP State Lodge