

**Wallis, Keri**

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**From:** Gabe Hall <mrsoup@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 18, 2012 2:18 PM  
**To:** Office State Actuary, WA; Matt Zuvich  
**Subject:** JRA staff joining PSERS  
**Attachments:** Pension document.doc

To: The Select Committee on Pension Policy

I am writing you to ask that you make employees of the Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration eligible for the Public Safety Employees Retirement System (PSERS). The PSERS was created to allow employees who work in high risk jobs, with high risk offenders, to be able to retire before age and infirmity make it too dangerous for them to work with that clientele. We in JRA work with volatile, dangerous youths that are, in many cases, highly aggressive. There is a high need for alertness and physical ability when supervising these youths. Fights can break out any time, caused by something as little as one resident maintaining eye contact for a second or two longer than the other resident feels is a “respectful” amount of time. The number of gang involved youth in JRA has increased significantly in recent years, leading to a marked increase in assaults by residents on each other. We staff are required to physically intervene when resident fight. We have seen an increase in staff injuries that coincides with the increase in resident fights. It does not make much sense to have 65 year old staff trying to physically control young, fit, and in many cases, large young men intent on doing damage to each other. Unlike staff, residents are not constrained from punching, kicking, biting, pinching and otherwise flailing at staff when we attempt to control them.

We staff are required to attend and pass annual refresher trainings on Dealing With Resistive Youth (DWRY) techniques. This training is certified through the Criminal Justice Training Center, as are the instructors. During these trainings, we must demonstrate proficiency in restraint techniques designed to ensure the safety of both staff and residents caught up in an incident. This involves a high level of physical ability to pass the training. Many staff have been injured while taking the original 40 hour course and the annual 8 hour refreshers. Some staff have been injured so badly during these trainings that they have had to be medically separated from their jobs. We are seeing ever higher numbers of older staff injured during these trainings.

Other employees who deal with this same population are currently eligible for PSERS. Staff of city and county juvenile detention facilities can join PSERS. Our residents come from these facilities. The detention centers generally have the residents for a few weeks or months, while they are being held for trial. Once the youths have been sentenced, they come to JRA, often for terms of several years.

So, in conclusion, it makes sense for JRA employees to be included in PSERS, for the very same reasons that PSERS was established: to allow employees in high risk jobs to not have to continue to work until there is an elevated risk of injury to older employees.

Thank you for your attention to this matter  
Gabe Hall; President Local 862 of the Washington Federation of State Employees  
Member of the Executive Board of Council 28 of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees