

Testimony IN OPPOSITION to HB 2391
Before the Senate Committee on Commerce
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Chairperson Lynn and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Laura Calhoun and I have worked for the Department of Corrections for over eighteen years. Today I am speaking to you as a private citizen, and not as a representative of any state agency. As a long-term state employee, I am asking you to vote against HB 2391.

The Classified System

The classified system makes sure all of us in the same position are on equal footing. Morale in my workplace is already bad. Creating a system where we could all be paid different amounts based on favoritism, the old-boy network, or any other non-job related factor would only make it worse. I am a woman working in a man's field. I work hard, and I do a good job. However, without the classified system it is possible I would be paid far less than a man in my same position.

Additionally, those of us working Corrections need the due process we receive as classified workers. Currently, if an inmate files a complaint against an officer, there is an investigation and the officer receives an opportunity to respond to charges and tell his/her side of the story. If we are unclassified, we could be fired without any investigation, and without ever getting to tell our side of the story.

Those of us working within the walls often feel the inmates we supervise have more rights than we do. Removing our classified protection would take away one of the most important rights we as employees do have. I can't imagine many people wanting to work in an environment where an inmate gets to determine whether or not you as a corrections officer have a job.

We are the people who help keep you and your constituents safe by keeping the bad guys behind bars. Please stand up for us and our rights and vote against HB 2391.