

CARL WALKER METZGAR
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March 14, 2012

Representative Dave Reed
Chairman
Republican House Policy Committee
128 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Rep. Reed,

I am writing in regards to the upcoming Policy Hearing on March 16, 2012 reviewing the subject of privatizing nursing services within the Department of Corrections (Department). Although I will be unable to attend this hearing as a result of an unavoidable scheduling conflict in my district, I would like to share my thoughts on this issue.

As you may know, my District, the 69th Legislative District, is home to two (2) Commonwealth prisons: the State Correctional Institute (SCI) Somerset and the State Correctional Institute (SCI) Laurel Highlands. Although my district's economy benefits from the prisons as a means of employment, privatizing these services will truly have troubling public safety implications. The nurses that are employed with the Department are given specialized training to provide their services with the highest priority being given to security and quality care. This training is given not only for the benefit of these prisoners, but the nurses who already risk their person to conduct their jobs. If these nurses are inadequately trained due to cost cutting measures by a third party company, the Commonwealth opens itself up to the dangers therein.

Simply, public-private partnerships are appropriate for many functions of Government. However, the privatization of nursing services for the Department of Corrections is not one of those functions. The Commonwealth has mandated the sentences, and healthcare, of these prisoners. It is the Commonwealth's duty to ensure that those mandates are fulfilled without hindrance or danger.

With that mentioned, I fully support, and am a cosponsor of, Rep. Fleck's legislation, House Bill 1985, which would prevent the Department of Corrections from using appropriated funds to privatize nursing services within the Commonwealth.

Should you require further information please feel free to contact my Capitol Office at (717) 783-8756. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Carl Walker Metzgar".

Carl Walker Metzgar
State Representative
69th Legislative District

CWM:bnb