
Task Force Meeting

of

ASSEMBLY PRISON GANG VIOLENCE TASK FORCE

*"Discussion of training of State corrections employees,
including corrections officers, on gang violence and related issues"*

LOCATION: Millville City Hall
Millville, New Jersey

DATE: September 27, 2005
6:30 p.m.

MEMBERS OF TASK FORCE PRESENT:

Assemblyman Jeff Van Drew, Chair
Kerry Riebe, Vice Chair
Assemblyman John C. Gibson
Bob Balicki
Joseph Butler
Frank Crose
Mike DeBellis
Mike Makara
Fred Vineyard



ALSO PRESENT:

Wendy S. Whitbeck
*Office of Legislative Services
Task Force Aide*

Elizabeth Stone
*Assembly Majority
Task Force Aide*

Dana Conrad
*Assembly Republican
Task Force Aide*

*Meeting Recorded and Transcribed by
The Office of Legislative Services, Public Information Office,
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MS. WHITBECK (Task Force Aide): Good evening, everyone.

As you all know, we're all here for the Assembly Prison Gang Violence Task Force. This is the organizational meeting.

My name is Wendy Whitbeck. I'm with the Office of Legislative Services. We're the nonpartisan branch of the State Legislature. I will just be opening the meeting until we're done with the first order of business, which, according to Assembly Resolution 240 which established the Task Force, it calls for the election of a Chair and a Vice Chair.

So, on that note, do I have any nominations for Chair of the Task Force?

MR. RIEBE: I'd like to nominate Mr. Van Drew.

MS. WHITBECK: Do I have a second on the nomination?

ASSEMBLYMAN GIBSON: I'd like to second the motion.

MS. WHITBECK: On the motion to nominate Assemblyman Van Drew as Chairman of the Assembly Prison Gang Violence Task Force. Fred Vineyard.

MR. VINEYARD: Yes.

MS. WHITBECK: Kerry Riebe.

MR. RIEBE: Yes.

MS. WHITBECK: Lieutenant Paglione. (no response)

Mike Makara.

MR. MAKARA: Yes.

MS. WHITBECK: Michael DeBellis.

MR. DeBELLIS: Yes.

MS. WHITBECK: Frank Crose.

MR. CROSE: Aye.

MS. WHITBECK: Joseph Butler.

MR. BUTLER: Yes.

MS. WHITBECK: Bob Balicki.

MR. BALICKI: Yes.

MS. WHITBECK: Assemblyman Gibson.

ASSEMBLYMAN GIBSON: Yes.

MS. WHITBECK: And Assemblyman Van Drew.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: No, I-- Yes. (laughter)

MS. WHITBECK: Congratulations, Assemblyman, you're the
Chairperson.

ASSEMBLYMAN JEFF VAN DREW (Chair): Thank you.

Can I have a nomination for Vice Chair, please?

I'd like to nominate Kerry Riebe.

MR. VINEYARD: Second.

MS. WHITBECK: On the motion to nominate Kerry Riebe as
Vice Chairman of the Assembly Prison Gang Violence Task Force, Mr.
Vineyard.

MR. VINEYARD: Yes.

MS. WHITBECK: Kerry Riebe.

MR. RIEBE: I'm not voting.

MS. WHITBECK: Mike Makara.

MR. MAKARA: Yes.

MS. WHITBECK: Michael DeBellis.

MR. DeBELLIS: Yes.

MS. WHITBECK: Frank Crose.

MR. CROSE: Yes.

MS. WHITBECK: Joseph Butler.

MR. BUTLER: Yes.

MS. WHITBECK: Bob Balicki.

MR. BALICKI: Yes.

MS. WHITBECK: Assemblyman Gibson.

ASSEMBLYMAN GIBSON: Yes.

MS. WHITBECK: And Assemblyman Van Drew.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Yes.

MS. WHITBECK: The motion is passed.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: I would like to thank you all for being here today. I know that we are going to have a good and productive session of meetings here.

I just wanted to outline a little bit -- what this is going to be and what it's not going to be, before we get started. The purpose of today's meeting is predominantly to organize, to set out the framework of what we're going to do to become organized. And then we are going to take some testimony, specifically on training.

It's important to understand with this Task Force that there are two parts to it. There are the Task Force itself, and I've also named, as well, a Policy Commission -- which some of those members are here. We are very much going to need the help, and advice, and work of the Policy Commission, because this is a complex issue that we're dealing with. And it's more than even any one task force can work with. So I want to thank all the members of the Policy Commission for being here, as well.

What's the purpose of the Task Force? The purpose is to make sure that everything we're doing within our system is as good as it can be, is

as safe as could be, that we're keeping our corrections officers as safe as can be, and that we are spending our dollars most effectively in doing that.

The purpose is not to whitewash anything. The purpose is not to say that the system is working perfectly if it's not. The purpose is also not to castigate or to go after any one individual, or group, or to find fault if the fault isn't there. And I believe everybody knows that. This is going to be an open, objective, fair, and meaningful process. That is the most important part of this.

And I just want to, a little bit, outline. This is a very unique Task Force. There are many task forces that have been done in the Legislature over the many years, obviously. What is particularly, I believe, unique about this one -- that I'm very proud of, quite frankly -- is that we made sure, in the way that the legislation was constructed and crafted -- and it was my legislation with -- Assemblyman Gibson also was involved with it -- but to make sure that it was done in a way that the people who are really involved, who understand what's going on within our prisons, who work in our prisons or did work in our prisons, were a very meaningful part of it.

This is not a Task Force that's made up of some administrative people, some legislators, and maybe one person who was part of the system. It is made up predominantly of people who understand the system, work in the system, or have worked in the system.

Again, I don't mean to reemphasize this, but we want really meaningful results at the end of this. At the end of the day, when this is all done, a report is going to be issued. There will be an actual -- I'll call it a book or a bound report -- that will outline the recommendations of this official government entity. This is not just a group of people that got

together. This is actually a function of the State of New Jersey that fulfills legislation. There will be a report with recommendations that, I believe, will be productive, and fruitful, and helpful, and hopefully save lives. That's why we're here.

The main topics-- And we've had some preliminary discussions with folks. The main topics of the meetings are going to be-- Today, other than actually being an organizational meeting, we are going to have some relatively brief testimony on training. As you all know, training is extremely important. And we have some good training that occurs within the State of New Jersey, but there are serious issues with how that training gets disseminated all the way down and, for lack of a better term -- I always call it to the guy on the street, to the person who is really working in corrections -- does that person have all the information that they need? And we're going to hear some of that today. I believe that as we have other hearings, we're going to hear more about that.

At our second meeting, it's going to be predominantly about intelligence gathering and communication. And, again, there's been concern about a lack of communication, that it isn't all that it should be, that the information does need to go from one end to the other in the chain, and everyone should have all the information that they need to remain safe. And that will probably occur in central New Jersey.

The third meeting would be on equipment, safety, and funding. And that one will probably be in northern New Jersey, probably Essex County. And we're going to make sure that all the-- We're going to do the best that we can to make sure that we find out as much as we can to ensure

that all the officers, and all the civilians as well, have all of the safety equipment, all the information that they need in regard to that.

Gangs are a huge issue, and they're becoming a bigger issue, not only in the State of New Jersey, but in the United States. And it's an issue that keeps morphing and changing. It's an issue that we have to be alert and aware of. It's an issue that we need to learn more about. And, hopefully, through this we will.

I'm going to be insistent upon one thing. We're going to do this in a very open way. We're going to have a very candid conversation. Those members -- those people that are here and in the future -- and I'll repeat this at other meetings -- that are afraid to testify should realize that you are protected. You may not be able to talk directly about security issues that are very sensitive issues -- and we understand that -- but about training issues, and most other issues, absolutely. And, of course, you have to use your own discretion if you're going to speak to the press or not. But you are protected, and you are covered when you are speaking to this Task Force. It's certainly within your right to do that.

Let me see if I have any other information for us. I think--

Last point I did want to make -- and I'm kind of having a little fun. This is the regular gavel that you use during the meeting, and this is the gavel that I hope to use all the time. (indicating) I want to hear from everybody, we all do. We want to hear from everybody. We want to learn. I do not want this to be political. I don't want it to be about any particular union, I don't want it to be about any particular group, I don't want it to be about any political party. We don't want any showboating from anybody. We want to learn, we want to move forward, and we want to make our

prisons safer, period. And I will do anything, and I know all the members of this committee will do anything, to make that happen. If anybody tries to misuse the committee in any way, or to misuse this forum in any way to do anything other than that-- And, again, we're going to be very open and very candid. This doesn't mean a whitewash. But for anything other than that, this is the gavel we're going to use. (indicating) And I don't know why the Mayor has this gavel up here, but it's just really big.

With that, I'm just going to ask the individual members themselves to just, very briefly maybe, make a statement or discuss any issues that they would like to in a brief way, because we do have testimony. And I will start, out of respect, with Assemblyman Gibson.

Are we on? (referring to PA microphone)

ASSEMBLYMAN GIBSON: I don't know. Am I on?

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: You're on.

ASSEMBLYMAN GIBSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It's a privilege to be part of this committee. As a legislator, I hope that, through the process, we'll hear things that will introduce us to legislative needs in the way of making our prison system better. It's certainly not our intent to mini-manage. We know that there are professionals in the prison system that are properly trained and properly educated to do a fine job for the State of New Jersey.

But at least from my part, as a legislator, I know there will be opportunities -- from things that I hear in this process -- that will encourage legislation to make the system better, that will encourage perhaps the expenditure of funding for the resources for our prison system.

I hope that one of the things that we will look into, in the way of equipment, are the vests that our prison guards use. From what I read, there are some shortcomings in some of the vests that are being used by law enforcement. And I hope we'll get into that.

I would like to take the opportunity to welcome the members of the public that are here, thank them for their interest, and also to thank the city of Millville for their hospitality for this first location for the hearing.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Thank you, Assemblyman.

Mr. Crose.

MR. CROSE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My name is Frank Crose. I'm the--

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Frank, before you go on-- Maybe if each member, too, could give a tiny bit of their background, where they're from, and what they're about.

MR. CROSE: My name is Frank Crose. I'm the Director of Correctional Services for Union County. I'm not a native New Jerseyan, I'm from Connecticut. I worked in the Connecticut correction system for almost 25 years. I've held every custody rank up to warden and regional -- and complex warden.

My interest in gangs is because we lived through the problem in Connecticut, back in the late '80s, early '90s. As a matter of fact, my staff and I developed a gang program that's been copied throughout the nation. It was copied here in New Jersey.

My sole interest here is to assist the Department in any way I can to not go through the same trials and tribulations that we did in Connecticut. And that's my sole motive for being here.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Thank you, Frank.

Mr. Balicki.

MR. BALICKI: I'm Bob Balicki. I retired after 25 years with the State Department of Corrections. I'm currently the Director at Gloucester County Correctional Services.

I'm excited to be here, because there have been a number of issues over the years that have not been addressed, and complications that have caused us to be in the place we are today. And I think that this panel has been assembled with a group of people who have a lot of experience and education in this field. And I think we can get some very productive things taken care of that have probably needed to be taken care of for years.

So I'm looking forward to making some progress and the publishing a document that people can refer to when they want to solve the problems that we're dealing with today.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Thank you, Mr. Balicki.

Mr. Butler.

MR. BUTLER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My name is Joseph Butler. I'm retired Director of Operations for the Department of Corrections. I started as a corrections officer and worked my way up through director.

Training has always been paramount -- when I was an officer, as an administrator, and as a director. I think it goes a long way. There's no

reason to have a multimillion operation, and you don't provide your employees with proper training. And I also feel that the safety of officers and staff is paramount in all your institutions.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Thank you, Mr. Butler.

Mr. Riebe.

MR. RIEBE: I'm Kerry Riebe. I'm a Lieutenant at Bayside Prison. I've been in the system for 19 years.

I'm here for a number of reasons. The main reason is, we have a lot of problems in our department, a lot of shortfalls, things that we need to do in order to make our staff -- the officers, supervisors, civilian staff -- safer.

We've got a lot of problems and a lot of issues that we need to get addressed and we need to get fixed. And, mainly, that's why I'm here, trying to assure -- in some way, shape, or form -- that it does get done and taken care of.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Thank you.

Mr. Vineyard.

MR. VINEYARD: I'm Fred Vineyard. I have 27 years of State and Federal service. I retired 18 months ago, and I was an engineer. And part of my duties was emergency management rep for Bayside State Prison. And I was on the Safety Committee. And I'm here to hear input from the people, right out here, to make the prisons safer.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Thank you.

Mr. Makara.

MR. MAKARA: Yes, my name is Mike Makara. I'm the vocational teacher at South Woods State Prison.

I just want to say that I'm honored to be the lone civilian representative on the Prison Gang Violence Task Force.

The Task Force has a mandate to help the State and the Department with progressive and well thought-out ideas regarding the threat of gangs and gang violence in the State prison system. This is only going to occur if we all keep an open mind.

It is my hope the DOC administration, custody staff, SID, and the civilian staff partake of the opportunity to not only voice their opinions on current situations, but more importantly, offer the members of the Task Force new and constructive ideas to improve the safety of our prison system. All DOC employees have the same goal. We must keep the prisons safe for both the staff and the inmates.

I'm confident that this Task Force will make that goal a reality. And I look forward to a lot of testimony -- a lot of open testimony. And I hope that, within 14 months or so, we can make that book nice and thick with a lot of good ideas.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Thank you.

Mr. DeBellis.

MR. DeBELLIS: Hi, my name is Mike DeBellis. I'm an officer at South Woods State Prison, as well as a union official.

First of all, I'd like to thank everyone for this opportunity -- for having all of us be able to be here today. And I'd like to thank everybody for coming.

Being an officer and a union official, I always have to state that I'm an officer first. And I think that by being here today-- Without trying to bring politics into this, I think it's a great idea to have the union involved, because we have the most connection out there. The input that we get from gangs, from training, from just the safety and security of the institutions will be brought forth to these meetings. And I would hope that those that attend here will be able to bring that back for us also.

Basically, I'm just here to make sure that the safety and security continues, and that we can all go home safe every night.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Thank you.

We have some members from the Policy Commission here, too. I would appreciate if you could just stand, introduce yourselves, and tell us where you're from and what you're about.

And you have to come-- And I said I wouldn't do that, and I did it anyway.

You all have to come up to the mike, just as we do. I think it would be more comfortable to sit. If you're a pretty tall guy, you're going to have a tough time leaning all the way over.

Two people at a time.

DANNY K. OPPERMAN: My name is Dan Opperman. I'm an officer down at Bayside State Prison. I work in the complex with the inmates and fellow officers. And I'm also an adjunct instructor. And it's very important today, since the topic is training--

I've been with the Department for 10 years, and I live right here in Millville. It's a personal thing to me -- with this Task Force.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Thank you, Danny.

D E N N I S B I N D E W A L D: I'm Dennis Bindewald. I'm a Lieutenant at Riverfront State Prison, in Camden -- currently the shift commander for second shift up there.

I personally know what information goes to the officers and what does not go to the officers. We definitely need to have some information distributed amongst the people that actually work the frontlines. And I'm happy to be here. I hope I can help in some way.

Thank you for having me.

W I L L I A M D A V I S: I'm Bill Davis. I'm a Sergeant at Bayside State Prison. My background is training.

The officers and supervisors at the Department of Corrections make a lot of money. I thought I would just kick that out right now. We make out -- good money.

No money, no position anywhere is worth losing your life for, because you represent the system. Because I represent training, I think maybe my input, along with the people that are going to testify, will try to make things better for the officers.

R O B E R T H E N C K E N: Robert Hencken, retired captain with the Department of Corrections. I started at Trenton Prison and was acting chief for a while at Bayside.

The Commission is needed. With my interaction with the Department, presently--

Training, as Mr. Butler said, is paramount, but not with this Department. That issue has to be looked at entirely. The Commissioner constantly states he supports training. And you're going to hear testimony today that that is not the fact.

I wish to work hand in hand with everybody on the committee and get the job done.

Thank you.

M I C H A E L S I M M E R M A N: My name is Mike Simmerman. I'm an agriculture teacher at Bayside State Prison.

I'm here to help out in any way I can with the civilian side and custody side, because I work with both sides. Any input that I can give in to help this Task Force to make this a better thing, I would like to help in that. And I appreciate the opportunity of doing so.

I deal with, like, 30 inmates every day, so I do see quite a bit out there. And I do hear a lot of things. So I think my input could help a little bit here. So I appreciate the opportunity.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: I'm sure it will.

Thank you.

G E O R G E A D A M S: How are you doing?

My name is George Adams. I'm an Officer at East Jersey State Prison for the past 19 years. At the present time I'm in the Ad Seg unit, where all the inmates that cause problems in other jails are sent to, whether it's gang violence or whatever the case -- situations happen to be. I'd like to have some input to help the safety for both custody and civilian staff throughout the jails in all the State prisons.

W I L L I A M S P A R R O W S R.: My name is William Sparrow Sr. from New Jersey State Prison -- and also a union official. I'm also the liaison for Juvenile Justice Commission -- whereas the Juvenile Justice Commission -- you have a lot of the young kids who are forming gangs. And that's basically the breeding ground.

And within the adult system, we have a lot of problems where the kids just graduate. And I'm here in order to help to prevent some of these things. These issues -- they need to be brought up. And the starting ground would be within the Juvenile Justice Commission.

T H O M A S J. W I L S O N: My name is Tom Wilson. I'm a Senior Corrections Officer at New Jersey State Prison. I've been with the Department for five-and-a-half years. I'm also the union official.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Assemblyman Van Drew, Assemblyman Gibson, and their constituents for the opportunity to be part of this, and try to make our system safer for our officers and civilian staff.

R U S S E L L L E A K: Yes, my name is Russell Leak. I'm the President of NJSEA, and I also work at Northern State Prison. And I want to thank -- the opportunity for -- you and your members for allowing me to speak.

We definitely need communication. We definitely need an overlap so we can continue to find out what's going on at other facilities at all times. Training is very important for us. It's something that we haven't been getting, and it's something we desperately need.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: I think that's it.

We also have a few people who are missing today, for good reason. Lieutenant Bill Paglione, who is the gang specialist -- who does sit on this panel -- for Middlesex County, is actually right now in Louisiana doing good work there. He was unable to make it. He will be sitting on our panel in the future meetings. Bruce Sapp, who is a retired officer with the Department of Corrections, was unable to make it. And Tom Moran, who

is the President of the Superior Officers Union, actually had a legal issue representing the union, and was unable to make it, as well, and will be at the future meetings. I believe everyone else is here.

With that being said, I think we will get ready for some testimony here. We have some people that do want to speak. If you decide you want to speak and haven't signed up, you do need to sign up, and you can still do that.

We're going to start with Robert Wagner.

And, again, as I said before, please identify who you are, where you're from, why you're here.

R O B E R T W A G N E R: Lieutenant Robert Wagner, South Woods State Prison.

I was part of the Bureau of Training for approximately six years of my career. I was at New Jersey State Prison for 13 years; CRAF, Yardville, and now South Woods. I was part of the training program.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Thank you for being here.

MR. WAGNER: No problem.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Do you have an opening statement, or should we go right to--

MR. WAGNER: Well, we're hearing everyone say training, training, training. Yes, we need training. We need training for the line officers, the ones that are in the housing units everyday. They're the ones that have the best opportunity to see what's going on. And that training would be passed on to all of us.

What we're seeing now is, some people are getting training. And my jail alone -- it's a big jail. It's hard to get stuff out to everyone.

And, besides, we should also-- Something should be set up where -- if we do have a problem in, let's say, Rahway, we should know about it in South Woods, Southern, Bayside. Every jail should know what's going on. We find out a week later, two weeks later, about incidents that happen. We should know this the next morning when we all come to work. Because if something happens between two rival gangs, you know it's going to spill over into our jails.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Tell me how the training works. I mean, how is it disseminated, how does the information work? There's somebody working right in the prison, working right on the floor. How do they get the information?

MR. WAGNER: There are people that go out for what they call the MAGLOCLIN meetings once a month. There are few people selected. And they try -- they make an effort to get as much as they can out to us. But it's not enough people being trained. It's not being filtered down to the line officer, or even the civilian staff. We can't put them aside too, because they may see more than we're going to see as custody people. Inmates will do funny things around a civilian that they wouldn't do around us.

Everyone in that jail should be getting communications to deal with gangs, identifying gang members. But not enough people are getting the training. There are some people that are getting it, and they do a fine job. And I'm fortunate, where I work, one of my sergeants goes out for that and he brings it back to me, and filters it down to our facility. And it shows, because everyone is identifying Blood members, Ñetas, Latin Kings.

Everyone seems to know what's going on. But we can't reach out to everybody. We just can't. More people have to be sent out to training.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: So where you are, you believe the line officers are getting the information.

MR. WAGNER: Oh, without a doubt. They see it everyday.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: But in other areas they are not.

MR. WAGNER: Right. We see it everyday in the jails.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: I'm going to open up the questions to the rest of the Task Force in a moment.

Give me an example of the kind of information that they would get.

MR. WAGNER: Okay. If there was an incident, let's say, in Bordentown, they would know. It's broken down for them in their minutes -- every jail that had something happened, what's going on between, let's say, the Muslims, the Bloods. And they would bring it back to us.

That's the kind of stuff we should be getting every day inside the jail, not a month later, two weeks later. We should be getting it every day. And they bring it back -- things Bloods are doing, how they're moving, words they're using, certain words that we never heard before. Last week I just heard a slogan, *red moon*. I didn't know what it meant. My sergeant told me what it meant. It was to attack us. I had no idea, none of my officers knew. If he wasn't at that class, he wouldn't have known. Thank God he was.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: So even where you are, you think there's still a little bit of a lag time?

MR. WAGNER: Yes, all over the Department. It's not only where I am, it's all over the Department. More people need to be trained.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Is there communication among county corrections, in your opinion, when somebody comes from a county corrections over to a State facility?

MR. WAGNER: If they do, yes, they're very good. It's interesting. I like talking-- I have a few officers that work for me that come out of county jails, and they see it different too.

Every jail is different, even how we respond. You can't respond to an emergency situation in South Woods like, let's say, you do at CRAF or Bordentown. It's just the physical structure of the facility that makes it different. So that's another thing you've got to implement in training. Everybody has to know how they're going to respond to a situation dealing with these gangs.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: There's a gang member that's held in a county facility, and certain things have happened. Does that information get transferred from the county facility?

MR. WAGNER: Sometimes we get it. I get it. I'm fortunate. I get it because of my sergeant that goes to all of these meetings. I get it through him. And that's good. And we try to pass it on as best we can. But I know not everyone is getting it. The key people that are not getting it are our line officers. They need to get this information.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: And you believe that's throughout the system.

MR. WAGNER: Throughout the system, yes -- just by talking to people, through experience -- the number of jails I worked, the academy.

I can tell the way people are talking -- really, they're shocked when something happens.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: My last question: How would you correct that?

MR. WAGNER: Training, training, more training. Keep every--

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Because the line officers aren't getting the training -- other folks higher up -- the training is taking place. But that information isn't going all the way down.

MR. WAGNER: It's not reaching everyone, at least in my jail, because we are too big. We are way too big. It's not that -- it's not people are not trying. We're trying, but it's just too big to get to everybody. We have a lot of officers between both shifts -- three shifts and whatever. And it's just not getting out there to the line officer.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Okay.

Questions?

Mr. Crose.

MR. CROSE: Would it be fair to say that you get this information because of your association with the sergeant, whereas the rest of the staff wouldn't receive the same information that you would receive?

MR. WAGNER: Exactly, but the sergeant tries to get it out to everybody as much as he can.

MR. CROSE: But there's no formal mechanism?

MR. WAGNER: No, there's no mechanism for us to get it out.

MR. CROSE: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Okay. Assemblyman Gibson.

ASSEMBLYMAN GIBSON: I wanted him to, perhaps, describe how one prison gang, in one prison where there may be an incident -- how fast -- and how they would communicate to another prison, and then how we, in our system through the training that you said, can specifically get it out at least as fast?

MR. WAGNER: We should-- It should come to us immediately. If you know people in another jail, you'll find out if something happened.

Example: There was a situation in Bordentown, Saturday night. I found out through a friend. I didn't find out in the jail. So I relayed it to my people in the jail. That's how I found out. There was nothing out there for me when we came in, because most of the people don't know. No one is calling from up North saying, "Hey, look, you've got a problem. Pay attention."

ASSEMBLYMAN GIBSON: And the prisoners -- how do they communicate?

MR. WAGNER: They know everything that's going on. Believe me, they know everything. They communicate. And they're well organized. That's the scary part of all this. They're well organized, they really are.

ASSEMBLYMAN GIBSON: So we have to come up with a system that's at least as good, if not better.

MR. WAGNER: We have to come up with a mechanism. Yes, sir, I agree.

ASSEMBLYMAN GIBSON: Thank you, Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Mr. Balicki.

MR. BALICKI: I had a few.

This meeting that you talked about that your sergeant goes to-- Is that the MAGLOLEN meeting?

MR. WAGNER: Yes, sir.

MR. BALICKI: And how often is that meeting held?

MR. WAGNER: Once a month.

MR. BALICKI: So during that entire month, as things happen, it's not communicated until that meeting comes up. And then it's only to the people in that meeting.

MR. WAGNER: Right.

MR. BALICKI: Second question I had is-- I know that the Department was working on and developed quite a good computer system in central office. And they have a Web site, and there's a lot of information on there. And I was wondering if any of this information of incidents that happen and things that are of the nature of safety and gangs is disseminated to the staff on this computer system.

MR. WAGNER: Not as often as it should, sir. And as you know, South Woods is a new jail. We have a lot of computers. Almost every supervisor has access to a computer, and some officers do. But if you look at the broad base of this -- of the whole Department -- there is staff that do not have computers all the way across. So even if you did put it online, it's not going to reach everybody.

MR. BALICKI: Okay.

And the last question I have is-- At one point, the Department followed the recommendations of the American Correctional Association,

who said that each officer should have 40 hours of training in a year. And I was wondering how many hours of training the officers receive presently.

MR. WAGNER: None. I haven't received any. Most of the people in my facility haven't received any. I was part of that 40-hour in-service training program that was-- I worked for Captain Tesoroni regarding it. And we were supposed to get it. The curriculum was there. We never did get it. It never materialized. This goes back to 1998.

MR. BUTLER: I have two questions. How would you suggest that training would be implemented at -- well, I'm going to say South Woods -- so that the maximum number of line officers would be aware of the information that was--

MR. WAGNER: What we have to do-- I realize finance is a big issue when we're talking about this. No one wants to spend a lot of money. I understand that. But we are dealing with people's lives here. I mean, so many people should be pulled out of, let's say, a facility. Roughly, we have eight housing units for a facility, and six special assignment officers. Pull so many out, replace them when we have extras on the schedule, and get them in the training class.

SID does a fine job with that gang class. I mean, it's very interesting, and it helps. Everyone that goes to that gang class comes back with some knowledge that they filter down to us. That's all part of the training. And we just don't all receive that training.

MR. BUTLER: Other than SID, how many custody reps do you have that are allowed to attend MAGLOCLLEN?

MR. WAGNER: I believe there's about six people that go. I might be off by that, but roughly around six people that go.

MR. BUTLER: Now, are these six people over the three shifts, or are they just--

MR. WAGNER: They're over the two shifts I know for sure. I can't speak for third. I'm not sure.

MR. BUTLER: Okay.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: I just want to make sure I understand before we go on. The average line officer -- what kind of training is that person getting?

MR. WAGNER: None. I'm being realistic with you. The average line--

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Who is getting the training then? In other words, how many corrections officers do you have in South Woods?

MR. WAGNER: I guess around 850 officers.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: So you've got 850 people there. Of those 850 people, how many of them -- in just your opinion -- are getting the sufficient amount of training?

MR. WAGNER: Let me be honest with you. The only training we actually receive is something that's mandated by the courts, whether it be first aid, fire, whatever. That's the only training we're receiving. That's it. If something comes down from the courts, we get that training.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: I get a job in corrections. I get my initial training -- whatever that is -- and then there's no ongoing mandated training.

MR. WAGNER: Except for the range.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Except for the range.

MR. WAGNER: Right, the range once a year.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: So the average person there -- the average person who is working there -- I'm not even talking about the civilian side yet--

MR. WAGNER: Right.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: --is not receiving ongoing training about the changes in gangs, the different gang members, what the codes are that they use, what the--

MR. WAGNER: No, sir.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: They're not receiving any information on that at all.

MR. WAGNER: No, sir.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Okay. That is not exactly what we've heard from the Department, as we all know, in the past.

MR. WAGNER: I can speak from experience. I see it. I mean, I'm being real with you. It's not happening.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: So they're hoping by word-of-mouth, by rumor, by a friend, by a leak, by somebody even outside the system that they may or may not know, what to do or what's going on.

MR. WAGNER: Right. See, the key is-- I'm fortunate that-- And being in the Department -- when you're in a department a lot of years, you get to know a lot of people. And we all bounce around to different jails. If something happens, somebody will call me and say, "Look, let your people know this is what's happening." So I bring it in the next day and let

them know. Because we have to be aware of what rival gangs are feuding with each other.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: But there's no formalized system to do that.

MR. WAGNER: No.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: There's no policy and procedure in place to do that.

MR. WAGNER: No.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Okay. Thank you.

Vice Chairman.

MR. RIEBE: I'd like to ask you a question. What would you suggest would be a good way to go about training the officers inside each facility, and how would you go about training them?

MR. WAGNER: Well, you need to teach them how to identify the problem, number one. Identify the problem, gang members, gang signs, watch how they move, watch who they hang out with. That's the key right there. Pick up nicknames. You have to teach them. And that changes so much from-- I mean, when I was at the academy-- I left the academy in 2002. And the gang class was a very good gang class. Mr. Holvey gave a very good gang class up there. From the time then until now, it's changed so much it's unbelievable. I feel like I'm dumb talking to some of these officers that come back from the MAGLOCLLEN hearing because it's changed so much. And I used to sit in on those gang classes every time they came up. They were excellent. But things change so much, we need to keep everybody abreast of what is happening.

MR. RIEBE: I keep hearing-- We all agree Mr. Holvey does give a really good class on the gang training. But is it geared towards what's going on inside the jails or the institutions?

MR. WAGNER: The tough part there, Lieutenant Riebe, is, unless you're actually in the jail-- It's tough. It's tough for anybody. When you get away from the jail-- I can speak even for myself. When I was away from the jail for four or five years-- When you get back, it's different. It takes you a little bit of time, to adjust to things that go on in the jail, for you to start picking up what's happening. If it wasn't for experience, I would have been lost. So it would be easier for someone right on the line doing this, bringing it back to the officers and training them.

MR. RIEBE: Have you had a problem trying to get any kind of training for your officers? Have you requested it at all?

MR. WAGNER: We want gang training. That's what we're interested in right now. And it's hard. It's a money crunch. That's what we hear all the time, money, money, money. I'm sure you guys heard it too.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: When was training cut out? Did this training take place years ago?

MR. WAGNER: The 40 hours? I can speak for the Northern region. We never received it. Never, never received it. The only training we had was going to the range. It never happened.

I think down here, I believe they were giving 40-hour classes. I'm not sure. I didn't work down here then. But from what I heard, they were giving them here at one time.

MR. RIEBE: Up until that, I believe it was 1996 -- was when they -- it was ended.

MR. WAGNER: Sometime around there. Because when I went to the academy in '98, there was no in-service training. Lieutenant Tesoroni, at the time, was in charge of in-service training. And he put together a curriculum regarding 40 hours, which you spoke about before, which was an excellent curriculum. He worked on it a long time. And he had it together and ready to go. And it just never materialized.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: And to the best of your knowledge, that was cut out because of fiscal reasons?

MR. WAGNER: Yes, sir, that's what I'm led to believe.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Mr. Vineyard.

MR. VINEYARD: I have a question. What other training would be -- like from one shift to another shift, if they had a problem. How do they communicate between one shift to the other if they have a problem with a gang?

MR. WAGNER: We do have one advantage. I mean, from first to second, we have to -- word-of-mouth in your facility.

But there is one advantage at South Woods. Due to the computer -- what Mr. Balicki talked about -- is, we have a recap that comes out every morning. And that's given to the supervisors who are supposed to bring it out to the officers in the facility -- what actually happened the day before. That's okay from the end of the day. But from first to second, it's word-of-mouth.

MR. VINEYARD: Now, the prisons that don't have PCs, computers, how do they communicate between one shift to the other?

MR. WAGNER: Just word-of-mouth.

MR. VINEYARD: They don't have any lineups?

MR. WAGNER: No lineups, sir. No lineups at all.

That was a big plus for us. We were able to get everyone there and talk to everyone. When we come in, in the morning, now, all we're doing is running if something happened, trying to get to people to let them know what's going on.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Mr. Wagner, just explain what the lineups are. I know, but--

MR. WAGNER: Yes, sir. A lineup is where you're entire staff stands in a lineup, and the roll call is called. If anything happened in the jail the day before, or anything is going on they need to know, the lieutenant will let them know at that lineup -- all the information that's going on. That was a real plus for us for the entire jail. I don't believe anyone that's ever been part of corrections will disagree with that. Communication -- we were able to get the information out. We just don't have that now.

MR. VINEYARD: Let me ask you this, when did they stop the lineups?

MR. WAGNER: Around '97, '98, something like that, in that range.

MR. VINEYARD: Between one county jail and a State prison, is there any communications for gang members? I know you mentioned that. But does anyone from the county jail come to the State prison?

MR. WAGNER: Not that I know of, sir. All I know is, if I have an officer that came from the county jail, we pick his brain.

MR. VINEYARD: And one last question. If you had it your way on training, how much training would you give an officer every year on gangs -- or weekly, monthly?

MR. WAGNER: Forty hours in-service training. That would cover. And then you're still going to have updates. Because, like I said before, things change with gangs. They change. As we change, they change.

MR. VINEYARD: That's it for me.

MR. MAKARA: Lieutenant, you mentioned about -- the only information you get on gangs is from a sergeant that goes to this MAGLOCLEN group.

MR. WAGNER: From the people that go with the sergeant and the sergeant, yes.

MR. MAKARA: Can you explain? I'm not familiar with this MAGLOCLEN group. Can you explain who they, what they do? Are they DOC?

MR. WAGNER: I really can't explain it that well. All I know is they talk about what's going on in the jails, what's going on in the streets with gangs. And they bring this information back from that meeting. They go once a month, and we find out for the entire month what went on in the State of New Jersey, and other states also, and inside the jails.

MR. MAKARA: So it's not a Department of Corrections group.

MR. WAGNER: I'm not sure of that, sir. I can't answer that question.

MR. BALICKI: I can tell you that.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Mr. Balicki.

MR. BALICKI: It's a Mid-Atlantic states-- The MAGLOCLLEN -- I can't tell you every letter in it -- but it's Mid-Atlantic States Gang Law Enforcement training group that, I think, is funded through grants of the Federal government. And there are groups like that in the North, the South, Central of the country -- and the West. And MAGLOCLLEN is the Mid-Atlantic states group that talks about gangs. And it's a networking group and a training group that gets everybody together to keep on top of what's going on.

MR. MAKARA: Okay.

So it's my understanding that the most important information that lieutenants get is from a sergeant that happened to go to a meeting once a month?

MR. WAGNER: Well, I have a steady-- One of my supervisors -- and he's in this room also. He goes every month. And the information he brings back is tremendous for us. It really helps us a lot. And I can see the difference in my facility alone, just by officers -- the way they watch gang members. I mean, it's incredible. And he brings it out, and he talks to everybody about it. And a few people from my facility--

I have a line officer that went with him this month, and I could just tell-- They're finding more gang material in the cells when they search, they know what they're looking for. And I have to go to them and ask them, "Is this gang material?" They would know. I go to them to find out.

MR. MAKARA: That was my last question. Does each facility in the Department of Corrections have a way of channeling that information down from captain, to lieutenant, to line officer, or sergeant? Or is it just hit or miss?

MR. WAGNER: It's hit or miss. And they do the best they can to get the information out there.

MR. MAKARA: So it's not even an organizational way of moving gang information around.

MR. WAGNER: No, it's not.

MR. MAKARA: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Next would be Mr. DeBellis, and then Mr. Crose, and then Assemblyman Gibson.

MR. DeBELLIS: You spoke about the past lineups that were given. Could you maybe comment on a benefit that has been proven in the past to having those lineups?

MR. WAGNER: Just for the information that we're able to give out to everybody.

I mean, I'll give you an example. We get a death threat on staff-- Everyone knows right -- let's say 6:00 when we start -- they know at 6:00 that we really have to be careful today. But once the shift starts, we don't have everyone there. We have a few officers. And we have to run around. In the meantime, the jail is opening up. We've got things to do. But the information is not getting to everybody. It's just not happening. All you need is one situation. And the second half that comes in at 7:30 -- the information is not getting to them.

MR. DeBELLIS: You had talked about South Woods in particular -- how it was an enormous sized institution.

MR. WAGNER: Yes, it is.

MR. DeBELLIS: It's different than any other institution that you've worked at.

Would your opinion possibly be then, every institution should have their individualized training, such as response, such as--

MR. WAGNER: Oh, without a doubt.

Let's be honest, every jail is going to be a little bit different because of the physical structure of the jail. You can't respond to a code in Trenton like you can in South Woods. I mean, you've got a way to go, and everyone should know what they have to do.

And the facility -- we run drills and try to keep them updated on what's going on. But it's hard. It's really hard to get everything done because we're so busy.

MR. RIEBE: Let me just ask a quick question here.

I'm sorry to interrupt everybody else.

You run your drills. Now, you take that upon yourself to do that, to get these officers trained?

MR. WAGNER: Yes, sir.

MR. RIEBE: Thank you.

MR. DeBELLIS: And just the last question-- When you were an instructor at COTA-- The gang information, such as the classes that were given -- if any -- were they given by DOC, or were they given by SID?

MR. WAGNER: SID.

The MAGLOCLLEN meeting -- the minutes are -- Sergeant Warren (phonetic spelling) just passed on to me-- The minutes do go out to everyone that has access to a computer. So we're fortunate, at South Woods, that we can get that. But you don't have computer access in most of these jails, especially up North.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: We're going to get a couple other questions.

Mr. Crose is next.

I have a quick question myself, though. The lineups-- Does that cost more? Why was that cut?

MR. WAGNER: Money. It was cut because of money.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Explain to me why that costs more.

MR. WAGNER: Approximately--

Initially, when I started in this business, it was 30 minutes. Then it was cut -- correct me -- 20 minutes. Was it cut again?

MR. RIEBE: Then 15, then 10, I believe.

MR. WAGNER: I'm not sure. I know it was cut.

And the information is being passed on to all the officers. You have no idea, when you go through -- and someone says to you, "Hey, what happened over there last week?" "What do you mean last week?" "Well, we just heard about it today." That's the kind of stuff I deal with every day.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: It costs money because there's more overtime?

MR. WAGNER: It's like 10 minutes overtime for everybody that stands lineup.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Okay.

I'm just trying to-- One of the things that we're going to do here, with the Office of Legislative Services-- We're trying to get a fiscal impact of what the costs would be of having 40 hours of in-service training.

I think the other thing we'd want to find out -- what the fiscal impact of that would be, as well.

What is sufficient, 20 minutes? Does anybody have an answer?

MR. RIEBE: I'd say a minimum of 15 minutes.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Okay, thank you.

Mr. Crose.

MR. CROSE: Thank you.

Just one comment about MAGLOCLEN is that-- Basically, corrections is just a really small component in that whole thing. It's mostly your prosecutor's office, your law enforcement officers from throughout the state, or whatever district you're in. And so it isn't solely devoted to corrections at all. Again, we're just one small component. And the guys still come back with a wealth of information after every meeting.

A question on the 40 hours of training. On the 40 hours of training, how much mandatory training-- You have to do your range, right -- which takes, what, eight to 10 hours of that?

MR. WAGNER: That's a day, eight hours.

MR. CROSE: So then you also have to do your CPR -- mandatory CPR. So that's another, what, four hours?

MR. WAGNER: That's a day.

MR. CROSE: When you break it down, on your mandatory training that you have to do to be in compliance, you're only left with 25 or 30 hours, possibly, for a year, to conduct other types of training. There's things you have to do. You have to do your CPR.

MR. WAGNER: Yes, you do.

MR. CROSE: You have to do your range. I think that I understand -- with the State Corrections, you only qualify once a year -- wherein the county, we qualify twice. That's 16 hours from us, out of our 40 right there, just to go over to the range.

So when you hear 40 hours, it sounds like a lot of time.

MR. WAGNER: No, it's not.

MR. CROSE: But when you break it down-- After you knock off the stuff you have to do-- To go into gang management, and gang awareness, you're not left with a lot of time.

MR. WAGNER: That's absolutely right.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Mr. Crose, you're familiar with county facilities, obviously. This is something that still interests me. I keep coming back to it. It's something I've heard about. Again, the communication level-- When there's some gang members -- and maybe I'm misunderstanding this -- are transferred from county facilities -- which happens all the time -- am I correct?

MR. WAGNER: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: And they're transferred into one of your facilities. There's also a lack of communication there, as well, at times?

MR. WAGNER: The only thing I can speak of-- I'll give you the newer inmates that are coming into the jail from the county. If they go to CRAF-- They have a pretty good program up there, where they ID every gang member.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Explain what that is.

MR. WAGNER: What they do is, when they actually have them strip, they look for gang signs and stuff. And they try to find out if they're affiliated. They do have a pretty good setup there. Lieutenant Riebe was part of that himself. And they relay. They validate this individual, and they put it out there. So that's pretty decent up there -- the way that's done.

But as far as once they get into the jails-- They just--

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: But if somebody is coming from the Cumberland facility, or the Atlantic facility, or the Middlesex facility, are they coming with some good information with them? They may or may not. There's no--

MR. WAGNER: Sometimes.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Sometimes yes, sometimes no.

MR. WAGNER: Sometimes we might get information, "Watch this guy so-and-so." But it all depends, really.

MR. RIEBE: It depends upon the county jail--

MR. WAGNER: Sometimes it's there.

MR. RIEBE: --as far as whether or not we're getting the information passed on.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: There's no specific form, there's no specific standard or procedure.

MR. WAGNER: No, sir.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: There's no policy and procedure that when somebody comes in -- they're coming from a county facility -- that you have to know one, two, three, and four.

MR. WAGNER: No, sir.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: There's no-- Department of Corrections does not have that.

MR. WAGNER: No, sir.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Okay. Thank you.

MR. CROSE: Well, I'm not sure that's absolutely correct. Somebody in the Department of Corrections receives information, because we validate gang members at the local level.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: In Middlesex.

MR. CROSE: No, in Union.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: In Union, rather. I'm sorry.

MR. CROSE: So that information we certainly share.

We can't share what we suspect is a gang member. But if we actually validate a person, then that information goes with them.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: What I'm asking though is, that may be because of the policy that you have in Union, rather than the policy that the Department of Corrections has.

MR. CROSE: That's our policy.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Right. And I guess what the point I'm trying to make here is, it would seem to me that the Department of Corrections should have a procedure -- standard procedure that when somebody comes in, you have as much information about that individual as you possibly can so that you know how bad, or what their particular problems are.

MR. WAGNER: That's not a bad idea.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Assemblyman Gibson.

ASSEMBLYMAN GIBSON: The officers that go to this MAGLOCLEN course-- Are they on their own, or is it the Department sponsoring them to that course?

MR. WAGNER: The Department sends them.

ASSEMBLYMAN GIBSON: Thank you.

MR. RIEBE: I'd like to interject something there.

Each institution is supposed to have an intelligence committee. The intelligence committee is comprised of SID, a security captain, supervisors, and officers who wish to be members of the intelligence committee. You have -- and it will vary from jail to jail, or from prison to prison, as far as who is on it and who is willing to be on it. Again, I don't know what the individual, institutional policies are as far as getting the individuals to come on to the intelligence committee or have the passing of information.

I know Bayside is different from what we had at CRAF or (indiscernible) when I was up there. It's completely different. So I know South Woods is different from Bayside and CRAF, as well.

But the thing is that it is not set in stone anywhere, as far as who will be on the intelligence committee, or if they will even attend these MAGLOCLEN meetings, or so on.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Thank you, Vice Chairman.

Any other questions?

MR. BALICKI: I had a couple more.

I just wanted you to clarify for people who might not know what validation means. Would you explain how you validate someone?

MR. WAGNER: Yes. In other words, we've got proof that this individual is a Blood, so we put them in the computer, validated Blood. We know he is a Blood.

MR. BALICKI: But how do you know?

MR. WAGNER: Either tattoos, or we know who he's moving with, we know-- And some of these guys actually tell you they're members. I mean, believe it or not, a Latin King will tell you. He'll tell you right off the bat.

MR. BALICKI: Now, the second question is, who set these standards? Do you know who set these standards on what it takes to validate somebody?

MR. WAGNER: I have no idea, sir.

MR. BALICKI: Okay.

And the last question is, have you experienced a gang who -- or more than one gang -- who realizes that you're ID'ing them based on them throwing signs or doing different things, and now they change what they do so you can't tell who they are? Has that been--

MR. WAGNER: No. And you know why I say that? I've noticed more and more now, they just don't care, especially the Bloods. They could care less that we know who they are. That's what's really scary about all of this right now.

I had a situation last week where we had a tip they were going to jump our cops on second shift. I was watching them get ready to fight inside the gym. I was actually looking at them. They could care less I was watching them. And we brought them out slow. It was to our advantage that we knew, because we got some very good information, what they were

going to do. We brought them out slow and nothing happened. But we did move a few of them out of the jail and put them in temporary closed custody.

But they just don't seem to care anymore. It's really funny the way they are now.

At one time though, sir -- and I'm sure you know -- they would try to hide it, try to change it. Not anymore.

MR. BALICKI: Thanks.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Questions from anyone else?

(no response)

Thank you very much.

MR. WAGNER: Thank you, sir.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Thank you for being here.

Mr. Opperman, thank you for being here.

I don't know if you have an opening statement.

MR. OPPERMAN: Sure.

Like Mr. Crose said about training-- Once you get the mandatory requirements out of the way -- which are eight hours at your range, and use of force, CPR -- which is four hours every two years -- it does leave about 30 hours or so, or a little less, of time to train.

Not only gang training-- We have to have the well-rounded officer to work in the facilities. That means personal communication skills, report writing. There's just an abundance of stuff that we need that we only get once in our career. And, basically, that's when you go through your initial training.

The gang training that we need-- That's a start, and I'm glad to see that's trying to happen, anyway.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: I want to make sure I understand something correctly.

The training was removed or diminished in mid -- 1995, 1996, 1997 -- in that time.

MR. OPPERMAN: Somewhere in that area, yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: In that time frame. Okay.

So we may have not even seen the full repercussions of that training being lost, because now it hasn't been there for a number of years. We're really starting to feel that, even that much more. Would that be correct?

MR. OPPERMAN: Correct.

The training that went on in the 40 hours was self-defense, numerous things. We just conglomerated into-- And you had fun doing it. And you know, as being a human being, you retain more when you have fun doing it. And it was all budgetary constraints.

The big driving force for them doing it away is-- Anytime-- And any agency that you have -- whether it be the military, law enforcement, firefighting -- anytime that you train, there's bound to be injuries. The more that you sweat in peace, the least you bleed in war. But there's bound to be injuries. So, to do away with the injuries that we've incurred, what do they do? Do away with the training. That was the answer.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Thank you.

Mr. Crose.

I'm sorry, actually Vice Chairman. Vice Chairman goes first. We're going to do this properly.

Vice Chairman.

MR. RIEBE: As far as the training is concerned, do you feel that the 30 hours or so remaining -- that there's sufficient time to put in the STG training, or security threat group training -- gang training? What else do you feel we need, as an officer, to help or assist the officers inside the jails or the facilities to make it safer for them and our coworkers?

MR. OPPERMAN: Anything that would have to do with communication, Lieutenant. Because, you understand, our best weapon -- as line officers in the jail -- that we have is our mouth. That gets us into either a whole lot of trouble or it quells a situation just like that.

Depending on how you communicate with your coworkers -- but more importantly, how you communicate with the inmates and manipulate those inmates to stay within the standards and guidelines of the Department of Corrections-- That's what it's all about. The more that you know about your job doesn't mean it's the more you have to do. The more you know about your job, the easier your job is.

MR. RIEBE: When was the last time you had training, as far as -- or the general officer, or the everyday officer out there -- has had that type of training, communication techniques?

MR. OPPERMAN: When they went to COTA. So if you're at the end of your career, being that this is 2005-- If they had interpersonal communication skills in 1980, that's when you had it. And if you did have it, all your training was crammed into two weeks, I think -- was the academy at that time.

Now it's extended to 14 weeks. There's so much stuff that's crammed into the recruits head at this time, they have to rely, when they come to the jail, on the experience of the officers that -- over the years -- to take things off of them.

Like I said, the way we're working right now is, with such a diverse crew from 1980 to 2005, there's a huge training disparity throughout the Department from two weeks to 14 weeks.

Me, myself, I'm lucky. I just pester the living crap out of them until they send me somewhere. They just let me go to training to get me out of their hair. And I like to come back-- I don't have a problem, really, talking in front of people. And maybe I'm a little too loud, but I like doing it. I really like doing it. And the more I can help my fellow officers, the easier my job is when I go work side by side with them. I'm lucky. I have a diverse -- I guess -- work quota through the week, because I can be five different places, where the regular line officer is in the same place, day after day, after week after week. And he doesn't see anything except his little area.

MR. RIEBE: Now, how about security things such as self-defense, handcuffing techniques, so on, and so forth. That is also inclusive in the 40 hour training, or the training that they don't receive?

MR. OPPERMAN: That could be inclusive.

Like Mr. Crose was saying, the mandated stuff from the Department -- that they feel there is an extreme liability -- which is firearms training. And then there's no defensive -- or firearms and use of force. Because they feel that that is the most liable of what we have to work with.

The CPR training, that everybody is just getting now, was -- is a reaction to an action. It's not that that was given to us because it would be good. It's to put a Band-Aid over something to make something go away.

We changed that at Bayside, because it was presented to the officers that the CPR was to be for inmates only. Those types of things resulted in very negative feedback. We presented it as the only thing the Department is going to give you that you can use at home if you had to. There has to be a positive outpouring from the Department, and not left up to us, all the time, to figure that out. And when we presented it that way, it was a piece of cake. And I'm sure that other institutions felt that that -- or that there was resistance to that. I've heard that.

Like I said, at Bayside, we're lucky. We have a lot of people who care. And that's what we have to extend throughout the Department, not just here.

MR. RIEBE: No more questions for now.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Mr. Crose.

MR. CROSE: Thank you.

If you had the 40 hours, would you be able to provide 40 hours worth of training under a syllabus -- a Department approved syllabus -- for your facility alone, where you wouldn't have to send your guys someplace for the training, other than the range?

MR. OPPERMAN: Oh, yes, without a doubt.

A big drawback that the Department has is, each institution -- and I think we have--

What we do we have? Fourteen, Mr. Balicki?

And not including satellites, there is one training officer for every institution. Now, that training officer has to maintain all the security equipment in that facility, attempt to do all the training -- like at our facility, approximately 540 officers on three shifts, which is why we have the adjunct instructors -- a bunch of us that went to school to help out with that. We're very short-staffed when it comes to training, with only one officer per institution.

MR. CROSE: Now, the National Institute of Corrections, every year, sends out a brochure of quality training that they offer in Colorado, and it's free of charge. Have you ever known of anybody that's been able to take advantage of that?

MR. OPPERMAN: The Department, recently, came out with: we can do whatever training that we want, even if it's Department-sponsored. But if it costs money, you have to pay for it yourself, and you have to use your own time -- a vacation day, comp day, an AL day to attend that training.

MR. CROSE: So if the National Institute of Corrections offered a two-week program in Colorado, which they pick up the tab for, you'd still have to come out -- your time to go there?

MR. OPPERMAN: That's correct.

MR. RIEBE: I've got to interject something here. I've got a couple of copies here -- the response from the Department for Request for Training, which the standard response is a denial, or you are approved if you pay for it and utilize your own time. But you have to furnish "proof of attendance" that you went to it.

Now, as far as the regular officers out there on the line, if they're not being given some kind of incentive to go and attend these-- They have to take the money out of their pocket, they have to utilize their own time. You do have some individuals who will do that. But for the most part, they can't do it. They can't afford to take the time off, or utilize their own time in order to attend these training classes, which are utilized inside the prisons -- which is something that should be paid for and sponsored by the Department. Seeing stuff like this is a travesty.

If anybody would like to read these, I'll pass these down.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Mr. Crose.

MR. CROSE: That's it.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: I would ask everybody-- I have a big mouth.

So do you, actually, Danny. We can hear you too. (laughter)

Just speak and project as much as you can. These microphones aren't always the best.

Assemblyman Gibson.

ASSEMBLYMAN GIBSON: My question is not necessarily for this witness, unless he knows. Maybe Mr. Crose knows.

I'm interested, in comparative purposes, what the other state police agencies have in the way of continued training. For instance, the State Police, do they have mandatory training that they keep up with?

MR. CROSE: I really have no idea what the State Police do. I do know that in Union County, we have mandatory 40 hours of training. And if something becomes available in the National Institute of Corrections that staff want to go to, and we feel is relevant to their job -- because there's

a lot of fluff in there, too, that-- You're not just going to send somebody away to Colorado for two weeks. It has to be a reason for it. Then we'll send them.

And, also, I spent quite a bit of money every year out of my budget, sending people to training to the National Gang Task Force, to seminars.

ASSEMBLYMAN GIBSON: If none of the other panelists -- Task Force members know -- I presume you don't know what the State Police training requirements are -- then I would ask OLS to research that and get us that information so that we can compare it to what we're hearing today.

MR. OPPERMAN: Well, for additional training -- just even looking at the newspapers, not even-- Let's not use even the State Police. That's another State agency. Let's look at our hometown police departments. We know that they are doing that, especially in gang stuff. Because we have our DARE officers that are assigned to our schools.

Now, that's a start. Because where do we get our gang members in our correctional facilities? We get them from the street, from the places where we live. They just don't happen to turn up in jail. Some do. Some become gang members, for numerous reasons, when they get there. This all starts on the street. And we have all seen it in the newspapers. It was in the newspaper yesterday about flashing the headlights. I'm sure that you all saw that -- for a Blood initiation right -- on the 22nd -- I think it was 22nd, or 23rd, or whatever. So I know that our Millville Police Department gets that training.

Now, I don't see a reason, because we're a State agency, that we cannot interact or interface with Millville, Bridgeton, Vineland. Because not only are we corrections officers, a lot of people don't even realize that we have the same police powers as our municipal cops, except that the Department has a policy that we're not to participate in routine law enforcement duties. Now, you guys tell me what a routine law enforcement duty is, and I'll come over and wax your floors. Because I can't tell you.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Thank you, Dan.

Going back to that request, I agree.

Actually, what we're going to do is, we're going to look and see what our -- I'm sure there are some folks here that probably know -- but what our neighboring states are doing, even in corrections, as far as training. So we want to look and see what Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Delaware, New York -- what these states that are around us -- what they're doing, what they require or don't require in their corrections, which would be interesting to see, as well.

Mr. Balicki.

MR. BALICKI: I just wanted to ask a couple more questions.

Do you know what validation is, as far as validating gangs?

MR. OPPERMAN: Yes. Internal Affairs or SID, special investigation division-- They took Mr. Crose's model from up in Connecticut.

Correct me if I'm wrong, but I think that there's five or six criteria that have to be met by that individual before they can be validated as a gang member. One would be tattoos, admission, prior relationships, violence from the street. And they use this validation not to make it where

we know in prison that they're the gang members. It's ultimate goal is -- when they use this validation -- for when they put them in the gang unit up North -- that when that inmate sues the State to say that he is not a gang member--

Am I on the right track?

MR. CROSE: You're absolutely right.

It was primarily to--

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Mr. Crose, go ahead.

MR. OPPERMAN: He's the expert. I'm, kind of, like a homeowner -- jack of all trades, master of none.

MR. CROSE: There was the legal issue that we were confronted with as to -- and exactly right -- as to whether we put somebody into conditions of confinement that were less than general population, such as a gang unit or administrative segment. You have to be able to prove your case. You have to prove that you have the right person in there. So we developed a criteria to identify and validate gang members.

MR. OPPERMAN: The parallel to that, I think, would be the civil commitments of sex offenders, once they finish their term -- that they can be put away forever and ever without anything else. It's along those same lines.

MR. BALICKI: The point I'm trying to make, and the reason I asked the question, is that the factors that determine whether someone is in a gang were established years ago. And I don't think they've been updated in a long time. And so the gangs have adjusted to our validation system so that they're not validated, and so they don't have to go to the gang jail.

So I brought that up to make a point in that, really, the legal system -- particularly the judiciary -- ends up deciding what the criteria are for gang members. And I'm not-- I don't know if they have any training in it at all.

MR. OPPERMAN: Well, to carry that a little bit farther, in the Department of Corrections in New Jersey, the line officers, the supervisors do not have anything to do with validating inmates as gang members. Special investigation divisions make all of those decisions. We cannot even write charges. We have charges -- disciplinary charges -- that we can write inmates. We can't even write the charges -- even if we know -- until we give all the stuff-- If we were doing a cell search and found certain paperwork or items, somebody else decides if we can write that charge.

I've had the training. I'm lucky. I should know, I should be able to do that. Let me do my job. Special investigation divisions have sole-- Well, they're just in charge of the whole thing, no matter what. And they do not let any information out. They like to take information in from us when we have our intelligence meetings. We all share. We don't get anything from them, in a sense. I don't know if they're allowed to or not. That's a question I can't answer you at all.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Mr. Riebe, you had a question.

MR. RIEBE: Just to, kind of, clarify something here. Any inmate that is a gang member, that is identified-- They're no longer validated, they are identified as belonging to an STG, or security threat group. That's something we have to remember.

In order to identify them, they have to meet -- what is it -- two out of three, or three separate criteria in order to be identified as a STG member.

MR. OPPERMAN: Correct.

MR. RIEBE: So the validation process-- I don't know if they use that up North or in Connecticut anymore. But here, it's now identified. So we no longer validate anybody.

MR. OPPERMAN: And on that same--

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Before we go on with that--

And are we saying that that hasn't been updated as much as it should be, or it has been updated? Are we doing that well, or are we not doing it well?

MR. OPPERMAN: We should be made aware of it. Everybody should be involved in the process. I think the days of all the secret squirrel stuff going on -- that should be over.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: So you're not really sure.

Is anybody here sure?

MR. RIEBE: As far as-- What was the question? I'm sorry.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: The identification process, is it as up-to-date as it should be?

MR. RIEBE: No, negative. As far as I'm concerned, from the custody perspective, it is not. I'm sure there are different legalities of it that we're unaware of. So I'm sure that it can be revamped in some way, shape, or form. And that does have to be looked into.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Does anybody else have a sense of that?

MR. BALICKI: I just wanted to mention that I think -- and anybody can correct me who is more up to date on it than I am. I think there is only seven security threat groups that are identified. And I believe there is over 250 gangs that have been identified. So the vast majority of the gangs aren't even in the criteria.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: I would be curious, too -- for OLS -- if we could just determine what our neighboring states are doing with that, as well.

Mr. Opperman, I'm sorry, you were--

MR. OPPERMAN: No, that's okay. I'm here for you guys.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Mr. Butler.

MR. BUTLER: I'd like for you to clarify one thing. If I heard you correctly, you said you can't write charges. Is that correct?

MR. OPPERMAN: The .011 charges, or the .010 charges?

MR. BUTLER: Yes.

MR. OPPERMAN: That is possession of security threat group--
Yes, we cannot write them if we find them.

MR. BUTLER: You can't write them anymore?

MR. OPPERMAN: Nope, not at all.

MR. BUTLER: How long has that been?

MR. OPPERMAN: Not until internal affairs says, "Yes, go ahead."

MR. BUTLER: So if you were to search a cell, and you come up with Blood -- well any group -- paraphernalia, or writings, or what have you--

MR. OPPERMAN: Let's just say lesson plans for initiation into--

MR. BUTLER: You aren't permitted to write-- I know one of them was a .111.

MR. OPPERMAN: Right. You could, but it's going to come back. It's going to go to internal affairs. It's not going to go through the normal process.

MR. BUTLER: It's not going to go to a hearing officer?

MR. OPPERMAN: No, it's going to go to internal affairs, where they're going to say, "Should they really proceed with this? Is it really big, or is it really small?" To me and the line officers, it doesn't matter. That's not what the charge says. That charge says possession or exhibition. Do I steal a dollar, or do I steal a penny?

MR. BUTLER: The other thing I'd like to know-- Training-- The harassment training in the *CF versus Terhune* -- are they still mandatory, or are they gone now?

MR. OPPERMAN: I haven't-- The *CF versus Terhune* -- I, myself, haven't seen that for custody staff for a few years. When we do do civilian training-- You're talking about sexual harassment training?

MR. BUTLER: Sexual harassment, workplace harassment.

MR. OPPERMAN: That is presented to the civilians. And, actually, the civilians get 40 hours of training a year. And guess who trains the civilians? Custody. So if Custody-- Custody should have that same availability, because they're there all three shifts as opposed to civilians being there--

Now, don't take away from civilians, because they're just getting it. They're just getting this now.

MR. BUTLER: No, no, my thing--

The other part of my question was, if that's still mandatory, is that subtracted from the 40 hours?

MR. OPPERMAN: I imagine they could if they wanted. Anymore, it's play it by ear.

MR. BUTLER: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Thank you, Mr. Butler.

Vice Chairman, did you have anything else?

MR. RIEBE: There's a few things, but I'd rather pass it on.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Mr. Vineyard.

MR. VINEYARD: Every prison is like a big city. You have fires and different types of problems. How much firefighting training does the officer have every year?

MR. OPPERMAN: Zero.

MR. VINEYARD: How many SCBAs and the personal equipment to fight a fire in a prison? Do you have any?

MR. OPPERMAN: No, we have none, Mr. Vineyard. A few of us, a few weeks ago, were sent up to Sea Girt for initial training on evacuation and light fire suppression, which would mean putting out small fires and getting inmates out. But that's as far as it's gone.

MR. VINEYARD: Okay. That's it for me.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Thank you.

Mr. Makara.

MR. MAKARA: Yes, my question deals with-- I've heard about the 40-hour training. The Department appears as if they're just not going to ever give in on the 40-hour training for custody officers. If they gave in and said, "We will implement 20-hour training" -- not to say that that's enough for what you fellows do-- But in what we're talking about, as far as gang awareness training -- is gang awareness training one of the top priorities of the different types of training that a custody officer would take? Or if you had 20 hours, you would, for custody-- As far as custody is concerned, would you fit gang awareness training into that, or would other priorities occur? Because from what I'm hearing -- is that you guys really don't know what's going on, and you're not being trained in gang awareness, even as much as some of the civilians are. That's, kind of, real scary for me, since I depend on you guys to defend me.

MR. OPPERMAN: Right.

MR. MAKARA: But the Department is not going to give in right now for 40. What if they did 20? Where does gang awareness training, as far as your priorities -- with custody training? Where does that fit in?

MR. OPPERMAN: We have to get in whatever we can take. And it's really not-- It doesn't have to come down to an offer, especially when it comes to people's safety and job performance. There shouldn't be an offer, "Well, we'll give you this if you do that." It's very easy to even get the minimum amount of 40 hours training, if that 40 hours of training is legislated in the 10A. If that is in 10A, automatic -- it's budgeted. It has to be done. And then you don't have to leave it up to one or two individuals. The Legislature, the people that we vote in and we talk to everyday-- Those

are the ones that are going to help us look out for ourselves, as us, as public employees, are going to look out for you, too.

MR. MAKARA: Thanks.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Mr. DeBellis.

MR. DeBELLIS: The training that you've been able to give out -- most of it's been voluntary, on the side of custody. South Woods, I can say-- Just last week we had a training class. It was a voluntary training class. And my argument with administration was, we were running minimum staffing levels to ensure that the officers were able to go to training. When, in a sense, the reason why we were getting the training was to promote safety, yet we were lacking safety in order to get the training, if that makes any sense.

Have you noticed, in other institutions, where the same situation may happen, where you may feel that the staffing needs might not have been there, in order to get the training that the officers are asking for -- that they're not scheduling for the training that's taking place?

MR. OPPERMAN: Yes. The top priority with the facilities is actually banning the posts that are allotted for the safe running of the institution. Take into consideration the vacation that goes on, the sick days that happen. You can't forecast sick days. Today, right now, the schedule could be full. And there was already a schedule allotted for training eight to 10 officers. Ten officers call out sick that night. Where are they going to get those other 10 without hiring overtime for it? They're going to pull them from the officers that were in the training class to cover those positions.

So we already know what the priorities are on training. And we have to-- And there's not a finger-blaming, or a finger-pointing thing going on here. That gets us nowhere. We have to set our priorities and manage our goals effectively, from the top on down.

MR. DeBELLIS: Thanks.

As far as the training that you've been able to be an instructor with, a lot of it is audio-visual. But is a lot of it also hands-on?

MR. OPPERMAN: At Bayside, that's the way we like to do it, because we realize, being human beings, the more you get your hands on it-- Because watching films for hours and hours does you no good.

I don't know if I can say this, but I'm a firm believer that the brain can only absorb what the ass can handle. So sitting around is not a good thing. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: You didn't ask for a legal opinion if you could say that or not, though. You just went right ahead.

MR. OPPERMAN: Well--

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Thank you, Mr. DeBellis.

Thank you, Dan. I appreciate you being here. I think we're good.

Were there any other questions? (no response)

Thank you.

MR. OPPERMAN: Okay.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Robert Tesoroni.

Robert, I'm sure you have a brief opening statement for us.

ROBERT A. TESORONI JR.: I'll try to keep it very brief, Mr. Chairman.

I thank you for the opportunity -- and distinguished members of this Task Force.

A little background about myself. I'm Robert Tesoroni, Captain with the New Jersey Department of Corrections. I'm starting into my 25th year, so I'm almost at the twilight of my career. I'm also a representative of the Captains' Unit, FOP Lodge 187. I serve as the Secretary.

In 1992, I was assigned to training at Bayside State Prison as a Lieutenant. I served 13 years in the training department working with our officers and staff members. I served three years with the Bureau of Training as the in-service training supervisor. My responsibility at that time was to coordinate all training within the Department. Basically, we tracked the training, because there was no funding.

One of the things that we did at Bayside, for many years -- and it stopped around 1996 -- was the 40-hour in-service training program. Bayside and Southern State were the last two facilities to cut out their formal training.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: I'm sorry to interrupt you. What stopped it in 1996? Was that an administrative -- to save money?

MR. TESERONI: It was budgetary constraints.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Okay.

MR. TESERONI: It's very difficult to put a benefit on the cost factor of conducting or not conducting training within the Department.

One of the most important things that we do in the Department of Corrections is communications. We cut that out when we did away with the lineups. That was budgetary constraints. We had a 20-

minute overlap. That's when you had officers that would report to work, they'd stand lineup, you'd do roll call, you'd pass on pertinent information that was relative to what was taking place. It's a very fluid situation that we work in. Those that have never worked in corrections -- it's very hard to explain. The analogy I use is, years ago you saw the guy with the oil filter and the motor. And he's a mechanic. And he said, "You can pay me now, or you can pay me later." Well, basically, that's what it is in this Department.

We've made it very difficult. I think there's an easy solution to the finances in this. We do eight hours requalification, because the law says we have to. Title 10A says that you must qualify annually. We used to have, years ago-- In 10A it said that you would receive 40 hours in-service training. It was taken out. It can be put back in. Then the money is there.

We have mandated training, *CF versus Terhune*, Holland Consent, Casmatic Consent. All these decrees were obligated by law to conduct that training as part of a court settlement. That all comes out of your 40 hours.

Several years ago, myself, Captain Halliday, and Captain Joe Bechtold from the JJC-- We worked on a 40-hour in-service training program for Commissioner Terhune. We formulated it. We did a rotation of a three-year program. We submitted it to the Commissioner, and I told him, "I'm not a bean counter. I'm not an accountant." I said, "Ballpark figure -- and it will put you in the ballpark -- you're looking at \$7.5 to \$10 million to conduct annual training for uniformed staff in this Department." I was summoned to the Commissioner's office the following day. And I was questioned, "How did you arrive at that figure?" And I said, "Understand,

it's not an exact figure, but it's a ballpark figure." I said, "You're talking X number of employees, times 40 hours. And I come up with a base pay for the officers." And I said, "At time-and-a-half." Well, at that time, the Chief of Staff interjected, and Mary Ellen Bolton said, "You don't understand, Lieutenant. We're not paying officers time-and-a-half to sit in a classroom." I said, "No, ma'am, you don't understand. You're not paying the officers time-and-a-half to sit there, you're paying the officer time-and-a-half to work their post while they're there. It's the cost of doing business." They called in one of their accountants. They did a figure, and they came up \$10.5 to \$12 million.

At that time, I was dismissed. I was told the next day that all training was put on hold. It's been on hold ever since 1992. And that's where we're at today.

I could go on. There's so much.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: I bet you could.

MR. TESORONI: But I'll let you ask the questions. I'm not as warm as Mr. Balicki. He had to take off his jacket.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Everybody is going to be taking off their jacket. We're going to start at this end, this time.

Mr. DeBellis.

Actually, I'm sorry. Go by protocol, the Vice Chairman first. Let the Vice Chairman, and then Mr. DeBellis.

MR. RIEBE: Mr. DeBellis, go ahead.

MR. DeBELLIS: Captain, you've taught at the academy a lot.

MR. TESORONI: Yes, since 1992.

MR. DeBELLIS: Can you mention some of the classes that you taught at the academy, so that we can have a background?

MR. TESORONI: I did arrest, search and seizure. I did hostage negotiations. I can give almost any class if you give me a curriculum, performance objectives, as can most instructors. There are a few exceptions to that, where you need additional certifications. And I am a certified firearms instructor in addition to that. But you may get into first aid, defensive tactics. I'm a little bit old for that now. I recognize that.

MR. DeBELLIS: Once again, I'll fall back to the lineups. Going up through the ranks, as you have, the pertinent information that was given through these lineups-- Can you give some examples of how it helped the institution that day?

MR. TESORONI: It's an invaluable tool. I had a unique experience. I took a promotion in 1988-89 at Albert C. Wagner. They call it the *gladiator school*. That's Bordentown. And what I noticed when I first went in there -- because there are differences with the 14 facilities -- is that there was no hot board. They conducted lineup, which was a roll call, and basically that was it. Anything that happened the day before -- it got put in a basket and, pretty much, it went to the shredder at the end of the shift. And it's like it never happened. There was never any follow-up. Well, that changed after we got there. And I'm not saying I changed that. There were other people who were instrumental, which is a healthy thing.

But passing on information is very important. You come on duty, and an officer goes right on his post. Now, we talk about a commitment to training, and I think we all agree we need training. I hear

the Commissioner say this, and I thought he was sincere, until most recently -- maybe not.

Most recently-- There's a three-day conference being held on a gang seminar. It's the MAGLOCLLEN three-day conference. I'm not a gang person, don't profess to be. So there's no misunderstanding. No one can go to that conference unless they use their own time, not even internal affairs. That's appalling.

Now, this is from a man who is saying that he's committed to training. Where does your commitment lie?

Now, you're going to ask the individuals to use their own time for this training. If their Department is not committed to something, how is the individual going to be committed? Am I going to use my personal time? The answer to that is, yes I did. I used it, not for a gang seminar -- to go to a seminar -- the police expo. I've gone there since 1992. I'm not here to grind a personal axe, but I went to the police expo this year using a personal day. And the reason I did was because the Department said I couldn't go. No cost factor to the Department. A captain is a 1.0 position. That doesn't mean anything to some of you, but what that means is, when I'm not on duty, I'm not replaced by anyone. The other captains just pick up your duties.

It's pretty much like yourself, sir. If you're not in your position, somebody else will pick up your job.

Mr. Butler, many years with the Department, you know how that goes. You come back the next day and your pile is a little bit higher.

Politics-- I've got to touch base on this just a moment. I'm not a politician, have no aspiration of being it. So you're very secure in your

job. (laughter) If I had aspirations, you'd have a concern, I'm sure. But one thing that--

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: You know what? I've been doing this a lot of years. Actually, I don't get that concerned anymore. (laughter) Bring it on.

MR. TESORONI: One thing our Department -- and this is for the new Governor coming in: Keep the politics out of it. If this form doesn't get filed today, it's not a real big thing. In our line of work, if something doesn't happen today, somebody could die. And you've got to keep the politics out of it.

So anyone that's a politician that has aspirations of becoming commissioner-- If I'm ever governor, forget that (expletive deleted). It's not happening.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: We'll keep that in mind.
Would you really want to be governor?

MR. TESORONI: No.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: I didn't think so.
Thank you, Mr. DeBellis.

Mr. Makara.

MR. MAKARA: Just a question on--

Captain, you were an ex-instructor, as far as custody is concerned. With gang awareness training -- would you be qualified to do gang awareness training, or would that have to come directly from Ron Holvey's group in order to get good, effective gang awareness training?

MR. TESORONI: You conduct what we call a *train the trainers* class. And we do this at the academy. All police academies do this, all

colleges do this. You have a train the trainers class. You have Mr. Holvey -- and I'm not taking anything away from Mr. Holvey. He's very good at what he does.

But if Mr. Holvey-- God forbid something were to happen to him tomorrow, I'd hate to think that our whole Department is going to stop because Mr. Holvey is no longer with us. It shouldn't be like that.

See, I never feel threatened by other people having the knowledge that I have. As long as I'm doing my job, you don't pose a threat to me. It's when I become a liability that I become -- that someone else is going to step in. And I think it's incumbent on us to cross-train people. All he has to do is conduct train the trainers, and then let our people go in. They won't do that in this Department. I can't explain why.

MR. MAKARA: Okay. So that's not happening right now.

MR. TESORONI: No, that's not happening.

MR. MAKARA: Gang awareness training is only happening from the gang investigative unit.

MR. TESORONI: Yes. In fact, there was a question asked.

MR. MAKARA: And there's only four of those people, am I correct? Are you aware? Maybe somebody else is.

MR. TESORONI: To the best of my knowledge, that's it.

MR. MAKARA: I think there's only four of them.

MR. TESORONI: Yes.

MR. MAKARA: Okay.

MR. TESORONI: And they have a lot of recognition, and they receive a lot of national recognition, which means that they're being utilized

by a lot of departments. I think this Department is big enough where we can utilize them for ourselves.

MR. MAKARA: I can speak-- Just next week, we have a CWA convention. And Ron Holvey is doing a seminar there. And I'm saying, "Well, that's great, because we're going to be able to hear about all of that at our particular convention." But my concern is that, if there's only four people to do the training, from what you're telling me, it's not-- We don't have the trainers to do the training. So that's a big issue.

MR. TESORONI: Yes.

MR. MAKARA: Okay. Thank you.

MR. VINEYARD: Bob, Special Operations Group, SOG, versus a regular officer-- What's the difference on training? Do they get more training? And what type of training?

MR. TESORONI: Well, there was a time when they got extensive training. Pretty much, that's gone to the wayside, also, though. Training in our Department is pretty much nonexistent.

MR. VINEYARD: So the Special Operations Group does not get any training?

MR. TESORONI: I'm not going to say they don't get any, but I think it's very minimal. I think it's only what's required, like recertification for the PR24s and things of that nature.

MR. VINEYARD: What does the Special Operations Group do other than an officer? In case some of these people don't know.

MR. TESORONI: Well, a Special Operations Group-- They're officers spread throughout the Department. And if there's a crisis situation, or a major problem within an institution, they're usually called upon to

respond. Fortunately for us -- up to today, anyway -- most of the time, by the time they get assembled and get there-- And it's not that they're slow responding. I don't want to take anything away from the organization. But by the time they get there, because of the logistics, normally it's -- the situation is contained. And we use them mostly for moving inmates, transporting, things of that nature.

MR. VINEYARD: Like riot training, firefighting training, hostage training -- that's not very much?

MR. TESORONI: No. We get none of that.

MR. VINEYARD: And every prison has a lot of fires. I used to work in one. They had quite a bit. There's no firefighting?

MR. TESORONI: For cell extractions.

One of the things I did when I and the other two individuals -- Joe Bechtold and Captain Halliday did -- when we formulated the in-service training, you have to know our people and what they're looking for. A lot of people are not receptive to the mandated training. I understand that if the man in the black robe says that you have to have this, you have to have it.

So what we would do, we would incorporate, maybe, Casmatic (phonetic spelling) consent or Holland consent training on a day when we're going to do for cell extractions. And that's where you actually have an officer -- a training officer suit up in a red suit. And the officers would go in and they'll extract him. It's the hands-on stuff, the things that they see as being important because they're the line officers dealing with this everyday.

By doing that, you stop the officer from calling out sick that day. If you put all the mandated -- the Holland consent, the sexual

harassment, the Casmatic consent. You do all of those -- the mandated training in one day -- most of your people are going to bomb that day. They're going to use a sick day. "I don't want that (expletive deleted)." So what you do, you mix it up. You make it interesting. And they'll show up, because they want to do one thing, and then you get them involved in the other thing.

I'm not saying that's the right thing to do, but it worked. And you do what you have to do. You learn from your mistakes.

MR. VINEYARD: That's it for me.

MR. RIEBE: Captain Tesoroni, how difficult do you feel it would be to implement a 40-hour training period for each officer in this Department?

MR. TESORONI: It wouldn't be difficult at all if you want to spend the money.

MR. RIEBE: And we're talking, roughly, between \$7 and \$11 or \$12 million?

MR. TESORONI: Well, my figure was \$7.5 to \$10 million. Theirs was \$10 to about \$12.5 million. I'm sure that figure has probably gone up somewhat since then.

But it's interesting, if you want to look at budgets -- and somebody should look at budgets. There was always a concern about the overtime budget, as opposed to the operating budget. But they were never compared side by side. And it was an embarrassment to some people that-- The *Trentonian* posted that we had uniformed people making more money than the Governor.

So what do we do to eradicate that? We overstaff. I'm calling it the way it is. See, I'm not a politician, I have nothing to lose here. But what we do, we overstaff. So we have 10 officers going in extra. If we take 10 bombers, we're still at zero. So the overtime budget went down. But nobody looked at the operating budget in the Department.

After we lost the JJC, and we opened up the boot camp, and Parole severed itself from us-- And yet the budget continued to go up. And nobody asked the question, why is that? It should have went down when we lost all those units, but it didn't go down. The overtime budget went down. The operating budget continues to go up.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Do you have any sense-- There were two questions I was going to ask.

I'm just interrupting you for a second. I'm sorry.

Before I forget them-- One of them would be, are there any ways-- I know money is a factor, it always is. Money drives everything, there's no question about it.

Besides the money factor, is there anything that could be done in training that wouldn't have an appropriation attached to it, is my first question. Is there anything we can do better that wouldn't cost money?

And the second question is, do you believe that there's anywhere where we could save money in order to find the appropriation? In other words, if the excuse is-- I'm sure out of this there's going to be a lot of legislation that's going to be sponsored. By the time this Task Force is done, we're going to sponsor legislation. And some of that legislation is going to have appropriations attached to it. And depending on the fiscal state of New Jersey-- And I believe we should do it, and I will push to do it.

I'm sure my colleague will push to do it. Nevertheless, as you know -- you've been around -- that makes it more difficult to accomplish that goal.

Is there anyway that we could do this, or part of it, or any of it at all that would be revenue neutral, or do you think not?

MR. TESORONI: I think very little that would be revenue neutral. My recommendation would be, you have to make small steps, and eventually you look back and you've covered some territory. My recommendation would be that we do the 20-minute lineup. You reinstate that. That's a big start. Communications--

One of the things, after the incident at Bayside-- And for those that aren't familiar with that, that's when Officer Fred Baker was killed in 1997. I'm not saying what we did was a bad thing. We had to make changes. Obviously we had some problems. But what we've done is isolate ourselves from the inmates. There's little communication taking place between staff and inmates now. If you're not the housing officer, it's very rare that you would see an inmate. Before, inmates were in the open all the time. I mean, it would be like the parting sea. If you could picture this in your mind's eye-- On second shift, I'm a sergeant and I'm walking on the compound. There's 500 inmates out there. We're talking 8:00, 9:00 at night. And when I walk in a straight line, the inmates would just spread. It looked like the parting sea. They feared me. No -- but they understood how things worked.

Now we have better control. You have two inmates standing there. You walk up to them, and they just look at you like, "Screw you, walk around me." And yet we say we have better control.

Inmates used to come up to me. And they would talk to you when they saw you on the compound, or out in the big yard, or in the mess hall. And they would share information with you on things that, maybe, are being planned by other inmates. Now if I'm not in that unit, I'm not getting that information. And maybe they don't feel comfortable with the officer in that unit and sharing that information.

It's all about communication in our business. Ninety percent of what we do is communication. And we eliminated that. And I think that would be a big step in the right direction, because at least we're passing information on.

The Department doesn't share anything. I read in the paper that you have a problem in South Woods. I was glad to read that in the paper. I'm a Captain at Bayside State Prison. There's 52 captains in this state, and they won't even share that information with us. We have to read it in the paper. And, guess what? The administrator is reading it in the paper. And there's only 14 of them in this state. And they have to read that information in the paper. What's wrong with this?

I'm sorry, you're supposed to ask the questions and I'm asking them.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: No, that's good. It's part of the process.

Vice Chairman.

MR. RIEBE: You were present during the -- I'll use the Fred Baker incident. That incident there cost an individual his life. It also cost the State untold millions of dollars, millions and millions of dollars.

Now, we'll take, again, the incident, say, over at Garden State recently. They had to lock down the jail. They had a fire there, so on and so forth. That, I'm sure, cost the State a couple of million dollars. January 1 -- I know that cost \$1.5, \$1.7 million for that short period of time.

For all these major incidents that have occurred in the Department, there have been injuries that have occurred to officers, or officers and staff there. Is there some way that you can tell me that the training that we've received will be able to cut back on those injuries, or the costs that are incurred by the State?

MR. TESORONI: Well, it's difficult to answer that. One would say, yes, that it does. I guess the only thing I can use that would help you is that at Bayside State Prison, when we were conducting the 40-hour in-service training program -- and it's very easy to check. You can go back to the Department of Personnel -- promotional exams that we're giving. Our people rated at the top all the time. And I mean, it stood out. And I can't believe there was anything special about the people at Bayside as compared to the rest of the Department throughout the state. And once we stopped doing the training, then it pretty much leveled out, where it was hit and miss as to who scored well on the test. And I believe it's all through exercise. If you don't exercise your mind, it stagnates, just like your body does.

MR. RIEBE: The question I'm trying to get to you is, is there a way that you can put out there and say, "Hey, look. I know we have these officers, we're training these officers, and I can show you that by training these officers, we have had these incidents prevented because of the officers'

awareness or because of their training. So we have thereby saved the State \$2 million.”

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: May I just help for a second, too? Is there a thought--

In other words, training stopped over a number of years.

MR. RIEBE: Correct. Is there--

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Have we seen statistically-- You may not have the answer to this. We may have to look at--

MR. TESORONI: I don't.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Statistically, has there been a difference because of that? Are there more problems, more accidents, more deaths, more injuries? Is that-- I think that's a good--

MR. RIEBE: That's pretty much what I'm trying to get across.

MR. TESORONI: Unfortunately, you can make figures do what you want them to do. And if you were to solicit those reports from the Department, they can make them look as they want them to look. We had a major disturbance, and we didn't have one before. So, certainly, the costs went up, or the injuries went up.

But I think, without question, training prevents a lot of bad things from happening, because you're giving the people the tools that they need to do their jobs. And, right now, we're not providing our people with the tools that they need to do their job.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: It would be interesting for the Office of Legislative Services to investigate the numbers of incidents of certain types that occurred before training was removed and after training

has been removed, especially as we go into these later years. I bet you there will be some statistical correlation of problems.

MR. TESORONI: I feel comfortable there would be.

MR. RIEBE: As far as officer injuries or staff injuries in responding to incidences, would you feel that there's been a dramatic increase in that due to a lack of training, or the officers' lack of knowledge in different areas of training -- self-defense techniques or so on?

MR. TESORONI: I think you can prevent injuries with training, because then the people know how to respond to certain situations. For some of our people--

I've been fortunate in my career, because I have been involved in training, so I've received training. But some of our people -- once they go to the academy, that's it. They get nothing after that, except what's mandated by the courts.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Which I believe is bazaar. I mean, before I got involved in this, it just amazed me.

MR. TESORONI: The liability alone, with the Department -- I don't understand that.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: In almost any other process, in any other position, any other job that you pursue -- even dentistry. I'm a dentist. It is mandated by State law that you have to have a certain amount of training every so many years to continue to have a dental license.

MR. RIEBE: That's it for now, I guess. Pass it on down.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Mr. Butler.

MR. BUTLER: Captain, I know there's a need for additional training in the institution. Since you are an instructor at the academy, what's your feeling, or how do you rate the academy training for recruits?

MR. TESORONI: I think the training is adequate at the academy. They have some issues, which I'd rather not air in this forum. But as any academy would have-- Certainly, I would probably make some changes if I was up at the academy. In fact, you'd probably walk in and see everybody new up there. And that wouldn't fare well with some of the unions. But it is what it is. Sometimes you need-- A new broom sweeps clean, I guess.

But the training that they're receiving, it's governed by the Police Training Commission. They oversee it. And I think the training they're getting is adequate. Gang training -- I'm not sure that we're getting enough of that at the academy. There is some other training that they are getting that I would probably eliminate -- elective training. When you're talking close-order drills and stuff-- There's certain reasons for doing that kind of thing. But the number of hours expended for a dog and pony show -- I'm not into that. If you want to see a show, go to the circus.

MR. BUTLER: Thank you.

MR. BALICKI: I had a couple of questions. You talked about estimates that you and the Department made -- I forget what you said that was.

MR. TESORONI: I said \$7.5 to \$10 million. And they came up with \$10.5 to \$12 million.

MR. BALICKI: And around what year was it that that happened?

MR. TESORONI: That was in 1999.

MR. BALICKI: Okay.

My question is-- As many people are aware, it took the State a long time to figure out that they could save a lot of money, if they hired enough officers, in overtime. And they did save, I think, about \$50 million one year when I was there, because they had enough people to man the shifts. And there weren't as many mandatories. Were the estimates that you got based on the way that they staffed before they hired all these people to cut overtime, or was that after they hired all the people?

MR. TESORONI: That was based before they hired the overtime -- or the additional staffing.

And something else with the additional staffing. I believe, as memory serves -- and sometimes, as you get older, your memory is not quite as good as it used to be. But I believe that when-- There was testimony before the State Budget or fiduciary committee that they increased the positions from, like, 1.7s to 1.8s, and 1.2s to 1.3s, and things of that nature, under the guise that that was going to be used to conduct training. And that never happened.

MR. BALICKI: My second question is, with that in mind, would you expect that if you did a cost analysis again, now that you have more-- I don't know if you still have adequate staff like you did, say, two or three years ago. But would that estimate be less money, because you have more officers? You don't have to replace everybody on overtime if you have adequate staff. So would it be a cheaper estimate?

MR. TESORONI: I doubt it would be cheaper, only because of contractual raises that you've had since then. So your base pay is going up. It's interesting what an officer makes right off the street in our Department.

MR. BALICKI: Right.

MR. TESORONI: I'm not saying they're overpaid, but--

MR. BALICKI: The next question I had was, back when you did the 40-hour training at Bayside -- and it was in conjunction with Southern State -- was any thought given to when the training was offered so that it minimized the amount of overtime it would cost? In other words, would you have training during Winter months, when people aren't trying to go on vacation in the Summer and you have more people available? I mean, did you manage it so that you minimized the impact on overtime?

MR. TESORONI: Yes, obviously we stayed away from the heavy weeks like Thanksgiving week, Christmas week, the summertime when you're heavy on vacations. We would still conduct training. You have to watch that you don't paint yourself into a corner. Because as part of the training, we did requalifications. In the event that you run into a major situation in your jail, if you had qualified people in a three-month -- or two- or three-month period -- on the range, and done everyone, and you had a Fred Baker incident at your jail, over 50, 60 percent of your people would go down on their qualifications. Then you'd have a serious situation.

So we tried to spread it out so that we were only looking at maybe 12 percent per month. If we lost a month, that's all we would lose on our qualifications.

MR. BALICKI: But the point is, if you manage it, you can reduce the amount of overtime it costs.

MR. TESORONI: Yes, and it's workable.

MR. BALICKI: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Assemblyman Gibson.

ASSEMBLYMAN GIBSON: The firearms proficiency -- eight hours, mandatory. Is that mandated by statute?

MR. TESORONI: Yes, sir. It's Title 10A.

ASSEMBLYMAN GIBSON: And I'm curious, since prison guards don't carry firearms into the prison-- Is that not so?

MR. TESORONI: That's correct, sir.

ASSEMBLYMAN GIBSON: Then there's a lot of other training that we've heard here tonight that's very, very important -- this riot, gang training. Does that-- Do you consider that more important than the firearm training, since we don't use firearms? I mean, is it an old fashioned statute, as it applies to corrections officers?

MR. TESORONI: No, I don't believe so. Deadly force is irrevocable. And I don't think that there's any way to get around that. Once that round leaves the weapon-- And at any point in time, our officers can be called upon to draw a weapon -- go out on an escape pursuit or go on a trip. And I don't think you can get around that training, sir.

ASSEMBLYMAN GIBSON: Firearm training is for a pistol?

MR. TESORONI: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN GIBSON: All right, thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Thank you.

MR. TESORONI: And the use of all types of forces, whether it be constructive, physical, mechanical, or deadly force.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Mr. Crose.

MR. CROSE: Just quickly, Captain, would you-- Would it be fair to say that when you were trying to come up with an estimate of cost for the 40 hours, that there were costs that you couldn't calculate? Let's say, because an officer didn't receive report writing skills, that he wrote a report that caused some legal action to follow. Or, let's say, on a use of force, an officer was accused of excessive use of force, not because he intended on using excessive force, but because he wasn't properly trained in it. Those costs, I think, are hidden, because the State has to pay for those sometimes.

MR. TESORONI: Yes. I guess the best way I can answer that, sir, is that if we conduct the training, that costs \$10 million. If we don't conduct it, and all costs equal \$9 million -- lawsuits, whatever, because the officer used inappropriate force, because the officer didn't perform his job, he didn't know his job -- it's still a cost factor. So it's less than conducting the training. Until we reach the point where the courts levy a fine that's equal to or greater than the cost of doing the training, I don't see our Department ever giving training. And I don't know if that's the answer people are looking for.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Say that again. I'm sorry.

MR. TESORONI: The cost of doing training, hypothetically -- if it was \$10 million. If the Department, being sued by inmates because we used improper force, or we didn't do our job properly-- If that equaled \$9 million, it's still less than doing the training. So as long as we're paying out less money, we're not going to see the training. Not until the cost of doing business exceeds what it would cost to do the training, will we see the training. That's my personal opinion.

MR. CROSE: And is it also fair to say that because of the fact that we're not following the ACA guidelines by the mandated 40-hour training, that we leave ourselves open for all types of questions?

MR. TESORONI: Well, you went ACA, so I guess we've got to go there.

MR. CROSE: I don't like going there, to be honest with you. But you have to, because that's the top of the heap in our business.

MR. TESORONI: Okay. Well, it's the top of the heap. Well, we're going to go there then.

I'm not into this national recognition, understand that -- just like being a politician. I'm not a politician. What does the ACA do for us? Well, some people look at it and say, "We need the ACA. We need the accreditation." I don't necessarily see it that way. In the State of New Jersey, the Federal government says, under the Clean Air Act, if you comply, that you get *X* number of dollars from the Federal government. But the cost of complying may be \$50 million, and the government, if we comply -- we spend \$50 million -- they're going to give us \$12 million. Well, you know what you can do with your \$12 million? You can stick it.

And I don't see that-- I mean, I know there's a big push by our Department for ACA accreditation. But I think it's because people have personal interests in this. I don't think it's to benefit the Department. And I could be wrong.

MR. CROSE: No, that wasn't the point to my question, because I personally agree with almost everything you just said.

My point is that if ACA is the standard that everybody tends to achieve -- to go for, whether you agree with it or not, whether you think it's

worth the money or not-- I don't know what it costs now, \$15,000 or \$20,000 to accreditate (*sic*) one place, besides all the work you have to do. But they set the standards. And the standard that they set is 40 hours. So that, in our industry, is the standard that everybody goes with. Would you agree with that?

MR. TESORONI: Yes.

MR. CROSE: So by not doing it, regardless of the cost of it, you're putting yourself at a handicap when events happen and you don't have that 40 hours of training in your background.

MR. TESORONI: Yes.

MR. CROSE: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Okay.

Thank you, Mr. Crose.

Do we have any other questions?

Mr. Tesoroni.

MR. TESORONI: Mr. Van Drew, you had asked a question earlier of a previous individual. Is the validation process updated? That was your question, I believe.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Yes.

MR. TESORONI: Again, I'm not a gang person, but I will speak on that.

Bayside State Prison turns over their population on a yearly basis -- or a little better than a yearly basis. We turn over our entire population. And by that I mean, either inmates transferring out, being paroled, or whatever.

In my entire tenure at Bayside State Prison -- and I've been with the Department 24 years now -- they have done one gang sweep. And that was after the riot at Bayside State Prison in January of '05.

So to answer your question, no, they're not updating their records. Because if they were-- They acknowledge that most -- and I'm not a gang person -- they acknowledge that most gang recruitment is taking place after the inmates come into the system. You may have been a gang member on the street. But if you weren't a gang member, by necessity, by means of survival within our little world as we have it, they get recruited when they come in. This happens after they go to CRAF. And yet we have only seen the gang unit down there one time to do identification. So, no, the records are not being updated.

Now, it's a monumental task for them. I give you that. But they're trying to do it with just a small corps of people. And they're the only ones, as we spoke about the charges-- We have to send this paperwork that I find, when I search a cell, to them for them to review. Mr. Butler has 29, 30 years with the Department. That's asinine. They have to look at it, and they determine.

And understand who they work for. They answer directly to the Commissioner. So if they say it's not gang material, it's not gang material. And it doesn't matter what our training -- whether we got it on our own or through the Department -- says. Once they say it's not, it's not.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Okay.

And what you're telling me as well is, that we're actually in the process of somebody being incarcerated and, supposedly, being rehabilitated

-- we are creating more gang members than previously existed before they came in. We're actually creating gang members in the prison system.

MR. TESORONI: Oh, I don't know, sir, that we're creating them. It's just through survival, though. You know, for someone to survive inside a prison -- let's call it the way it is -- they have to belong to a group, an organization. You're not going to go there and do it on your own. It's just not going to happen. I don't think that it ever has, but it's gotten worse, certainly, with the gangs. I mean, the gangs are pretty bold now on the street, anywhere. But inside the prison, we're closing our eyes if we say that there aren't gangs in there.

Part of the process-- I mean, they look at it as a badge -- to go to the gang units. I have my own personal opinions on the gang unit. They look at it as a badge of honor to have gone to the gang unit.

Well, part of that is to renounce. To get out of that unit you have to renounce your affiliation. And yet the experts -- and I'm not an expert -- the experts tell me, "You can't renounce your affiliation once you're a gang member." "Well then what the hell were you telling me? There's something I'm missing here."

Can somebody here explain it to me?

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: What percentage of incarcerated individuals are in a gang? If we were to go through Bayside, South Woods, Northern State, anywhere right now -- not in the gang unit itself, obviously.

Does anybody have any idea?

MR. TESORONI: I wouldn't even speculate to guess.

MR. RIEBE: You have, out of-- For each identified inmate that you have inside the prison--

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Excuse me one second, Vice Chair.

Before we-- Identified, I know-- Actually, though, just gut feeling. Because you have to go through a process to be identified. And we all know here that there are members in gangs that haven't been identified yet -- that you know are in a gang but haven't really reached the criteria -- am I correct -- to be--

MR. RIEBE: Right.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: So what's your gut?

MR. RIEBE: Well, the point I'm trying to get at is, for each one that we have validated -- or identified, I'm sorry -- there's between three and eight that are unidentified. So you can have, say, in a-- In Bayside Prison, we've got 2,200 inmates assigned there. I know we have 400 identified and suspected STG members, or gang members. That's suspected and identified, that we know of. But, yet, I can tell you right now -- you walk onto my compound out there, and there's at least double that right on our compound.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: So you're saying up to 50 percent of the--

MR. RIEBE: Correct, or more.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Okay.

Further questions?

MR. RIEBE: Just one more.

Do you feel that a custody officer, or personnel, would be qualified to train other custody personnel in STG awareness or gang awareness? Do you feel that custody personnel has the ability to do this?

MR. TESORONI: No question about it. In fact, if anyone was qualified, I'd think it would be the people that work inside the prison. I'm not going to kid anybody here. In my position, having served in training for numerous years -- between what I forgot and what's changed, it's a relearning process for me when I go in the compound. Things change that much. And it's that way with anyone. When you leave one job and go to another, things change. If you went back, you'd have to relearn the process. It's not a total learning process, but you'd have to relearn what you were doing before.

But, yes, if you give me a performance objective-- And I'm not a gang person. You give me a train the trainers class, so I have the expert give me the class -- "This is how I want you to do it. This is your bible, your lesson plan" -- and you follow my lesson plan, then anyone can give that class.

MR. RIEBE: Now, have you attended any of the recent training -- gang training, or STG training programs? I don't know if anybody in here has, that I can really call up here quickly on this.

There's a point I'm trying to make here. The STG training that they have -- or security threat group training that they have-- How is it related to what is going on inside the State prisons, as well as on the streets? In other words, is the training that they're offering directly related to our jobs inside?

MR. TESORONI: I can't answer that. I haven't went to the training.

MR. BALICKI: I can answer that a little bit. The one that's coming up -- I don't know if you read it or not -- in Egg Harbor Township is the MAGLOCLLEN training you're talking about. I believe about a quarter of the training is geared towards corrections, and the rest is geared towards police.

MR. TESORONI: But again, that three-day seminar -- none of our people-- Well, SID -- those that are going have to use their own time. Even SID have to use their own time to go to that. Where's your commitment to training?

And, see, we need to sell our people on this. That's so important that this committee understands. You have to sell your people on it. I have to be able to sell lawnmowers to Eskimos. And I can do that, if the people above me are demonstrating that they're committed to it. And the commitment is not there, it's truly not there.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: I believe you.

Anybody else? (no response)

Thank you, Mr. Tesoroni.

MR. TESORONI: Thank you.

Our last witness will be Michael Simmerman.

MR. SIMMERMAN: I have nothing to comment on.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: You're done?

MR. SIMMERMAN: Yes, I'm done.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: They did such a good job?

MR. SIMMERMAN: They did.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Do we have anybody else here from the Policy Commission or member of the public that would like to testify before I close the meeting?

Please come forward.

And we know who you are, but you have to state your name again. You have to go -- otherwise they yell at me.

MR. WILSON: Tom Wilson, from New Jersey State Prison.

I have a three-page prepared statement I'd like to read real quick, and then I'll try and answer any questions that I can.

My name is Senior Corrections Officer Thomas J. Wilson. I work for the Department of Corrections and New Jersey State Prison. I am also the Secretary of the New Jersey State Corrections Association Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 200.

Prior to my employment with the New Jersey Department of Corrections, I worked for two-and-a-half years in the Hunterdon County Department of Corrections and the Monroe County, Pennsylvania, Department of Corrections. I am here to speak to you today to address concerns that myself, other officers, and the Officers Bargaining Representative believe -- that our Department has done nothing to protect its officers, the community, civilian staff, and the public at large.

I am not an expert on gangs. In fact, other than the training I have received in the Correctional Officer Training Academy, I have not been offered any training on gangs except for the training offered by the New Jersey State Corrections Association through the New Jersey State Police this year.

Concerns regarding events at Bayside State Prison on January 1, 2005, with the Department of Corrections labeling the riot at Bayside State Prison as a fracas-- This is just one example of our society's resistance to admitting that there is a major gang problem in our country and within our prison systems.

Since my time spent at the New Jersey Department of Corrections Training Academy at Sea Girt, as I stated before, I have not received any training to, or -- including training gangs and their networks and structure. Under an agreement with the previous bargaining unit, officers with the Department of Corrections were supposed to receive 40 hours a year training. There are some institutions that may do this training at this time; there are others that don't at all.

It is sad when the bargaining representative for the front line officers offers to its members gang training from the New Jersey State Police before the Department of Corrections does. The only training that I have received, as I stated -- again -- other than the mandatory of CPR, use of automatic external defibrillator, blood-borne pathogens, required qualifications in firearms, and chemical agents and fires within the institutions-- It seems to me the Department is only training its officers in the areas that would relieve the Department of liability or responsibility. One would think that training officers in the proper ways of defending themselves and the civilian staff that work within the security perimeter should be a priority.

Our Department has found it more important to offer this training to civilian staff at Garden State Correctional Facility, and not offer

this training to its officers. Just for clarification, our officers are training the civilian staff.

I am not against training civilian staff in the areas of self-defense within the security perimeter, but I believe it to be more prudent to train the officers first. The officers are the first responders to an emergency within the institution, not the civilian staff. Our officers should be given refresher or full self-defense classes. Once all officers receive the training, then civilian staff should receive it also.

As I stated before, I have been in the Department of Corrections for five-and-a-half years. And the last self-defense training or refresher courses that I have received were five-and-a-half years ago. How much am I supposed to remember?

I have witnessed, personally, the effects of gang activity inside the security perimeter. Our Department has set up, within some institutions, gang committees. It is my understanding that these committees were established to combat the gang activity inside the institutions. On October 27, 2003, in New Jersey State Prison, on a housing unit that I was assigned to work, one alleged gang member attacked, and attempted to stab in the throat, another alleged gang member. I was approached after the incident by a member of the gang committee at New Jersey State Prison. The discussion led to a question of this committee member if the gang committee knew of the impending hit. The committee member stated to me that they had known about the hit. I then asked why the unit officers were not notified of the impending hit. The response I received was an answer stating that the gang committee did

not want the convicts to find out, because they knew that the officers would tell the convicts that they knew about the hit.

It is my belief that conduct like this not only threatens the well-being and safety of the officers that we represent, but also puts the public at risk. I am flabbergasted as to why the Department refuses to train the officers that are charged with the safety and security of the institutions in which they work. I am very unhappy that I am held accountable for information that is not easily accessible, and then not offered training relevant to my profession.

I would wonder if Trenton Fire Department requires its firefighters to know the procedures of fighting a flammable liquid fire or a magnesium fire without giving the firefighters the instruction on what to do -- the dos and don'ts, and procedures behind them.

The gangs are always finding new ways to mask their activity, but officers on the frontlines are not even taught the warning signs, tactics, known activities, incidents that may be impending. And the Department cries about budgetary constraints within their budgets. We have gangs targeting law enforcement officers all over the country for gang initiations. We have brother and sister officers being murdered as initiation into a gang. These gang members are elevated to a status symbol for killing an officer. This happens inside and outside the security perimeter. It is time to stop treating officers as the convicted felons. Afford us the training we so rightfully deserve for putting our lives on the line every day to keep the public safe.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAN DREW: Thank you.

Any questions? (no response)

I appreciate you being here. Thank you.

And if you could submit that, so we can pass it to each member of the committee--

I again want to thank you all for being here.

Just to remind everybody, the next meeting will be on intelligence gathering and communication. And I believe that that will probably be in central New Jersey. And the third meeting will be on equipment safety and funding. That will be in the most northern part of the state.

And after that, we will review everything and see if we need further meetings. And we will be issuing a report, as well.

Any other questions? (no response)

The meeting is adjourned.

(MEETING CONCLUDED)