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October 21, 2008

## Equality for ALL Behind the Wire – and Chaplains

The Honorable Sen. John Whitmire  
P.O. Box 12068  
Capitol Station  
Austin, Texas 78711

CC: Vice Chair Sen. Kel Seliger, Sen. John Carona,  
Sen. Bob Deuell, Sen. Rodney Ellis,  
Sen. Glenn Hegar, Sen. Juan Hinojosa,  
with renditions to Oliver Bell, Brad Livingston, and TBCJ.

Dear Senator Whitmire and honorable members of the Senate CJ committee:

You and your colleagues have been addressing TDCJ correctional officer pay raises specifically regarding the security of the prisons due to staffing shortages. Good stewards need to do this. I work with some of the best people, and this is an important issue for all of **Behind the Wire**.

I forward that TDCJ officer retention (and attrition) is not a pay problem. It is a **RECRUITING** problem. At the Gib Lewis Unit in Woodville, we have a 95% staffing that is a **DIRECT** result of recruiting by hard hit-the-dirt tactics, even **HAND-PAINTED** 4x4' signs on fence posts on the four corners of our town. Here is a copy of the 4x8' sign that they put on the courthouse square, the date hand *repainted* for each session. It is posted **TODAY** for *another* seminar in a couple of weeks! When I sent the first draft of this letter a couple of weeks ago, I pulled it out from its outside storage with other signs, like annual fiesta dinner fund raisers, for this snapshot.



This is a badge of honor and loyalty and dedication that you do NOT see in the private sector. You do NOT see that at IMB, Cisco, or Microsoft; their employees are not raising hand-painted signs for recruitment, not even thinking about such. I'll bet you do not see that in the FBOP or any state prison in the USA (but we do not *know* that, because no one has seriously looked at how other states recruit—not by the public record anyway). That sign and the enormous self-initiative and TDCJ loyalty and pride and hard hit-the-dirt tactics need a reward, sirs, and pronto. A billion-dollar

## Equity for ALL Behind the Wire – and Chaplains

agency ... and a local prison has **SOLVED** its own recruiting problem with **ZERO** extra funds ... believe me when I say I can write a book about that kind of honor and initiative.

Using retention (and attrition) as the primary reason for a \$450 million raise for our Correctional Officers is a one reason, but it simply is NOT true. There are many GOOD officers that would stay if you took \$200 a month FROM them, supervisors and Wardens too, because they are loyal, because of the benefits, and because of THEIR investment and love for TDCJ. The employees who STAY are putting up hand-painted signs! Working their OWN problems!

This recruitment achievement is accomplished by the Gib Lewis Unit and 4-5 other units, and – if by all – nearly the entire reason for the \$450 million expenditure is erased, and with it the security concerns attentive to the majority of the rhetoric on pay raises. With a zero marketing budget, the Gib Lewis Unit has *solved* its own problem – what an achievement! I would bet that what the Lewis Unit and other 5 units have accomplished has done more for *actual* recruitment than the entire department budgeted just for that, but I don't know. But someone knows.

With \$20 million devoted solely to developing unit recruiting and marketing on ALL units, would that END staff shortage? If it comes close, I just saved you \$300 million. This is simple accounting. Elementary economics.

The reason to give \$450 million for salaries is because **ALL the TDCJ staff Behind the Wire** need it. You cannot run a prison without toilet paper, and the supply lady who handles our unit budget for supplies, as well as grievance, mail room, and maintenance—**ALL** deserve a raise just as the officers. Why divide us to cater to the weak? **ALL** deserve a raise because statewide ALL *Behind the Wire* are below par for their respective responsibilities COMPARED to other state employees across the board (I have proof of that from dealings with the Texas Auditor's office in 2001). This includes the mailroom and warden's secretary whose jobs are more along the lines of executive assistants than what their pay compensates them for compared to others in Texas, to say nothing of those in the private sector. Please hear this – EVERYONE **Behind the Wire** is exposed to inmates *regularly*.

Do you think maintenance or grievance or chaplaincy are less a part of the **security** TEAM?

All who work **Behind the Wire** should get 20%, and if you cannot boost the offering for ALL, then make it 15% for ALL. But not simply the correctional officers. This includes the wardens, even, but most especially all those *underneath* the wardens and **Behind the Wire**. I wrote on this in 2001:

[www.PreciousHeart.net/chaplaincy/Unit\\_Employee\\_Pay.htm](http://www.PreciousHeart.net/chaplaincy/Unit_Employee_Pay.htm)

As I said in that 2001 article, to "exclude" one group as one TPEA official did simply because some CO's are leaving actually and certainly becomes a prejudice against the CO's who are staying as well as certainly prejudicial against the excluded supervisors. But we at the Gib Lewis Unit with a **ZERO** marketing budget and hard get-down-to-work tactics have 95% staffing, and after this academy's graduation may be up to 105% staffing. I say **REWARD** the Gib Lewis Unit with raises, and other five units who are **DOING** precisely what that 1/2 billion dollar offering is **TRYING** to do. Reward those who have *already* done it! Cost—what?—perhaps only \$50 million to reward those like the Lewis Unit for **DOING** what is uncanny in the industry and essentially alone. Governor Perry ought to support you on this, if he was serious about Performance-Based Budgeting as explained in 2000:

[www.PreciousHeart.net/chaplaincy/Performance\\_MeasuresSAO-2000.pdf](http://www.PreciousHeart.net/chaplaincy/Performance_MeasuresSAO-2000.pdf)

In this, raises are encouraged for JUST such accomplishments. But how many have been given?

When my warden accompanies me to a ministerial alliance meeting to pass out recruiting flyers, sheese, TDCJ could pick the lunch tab for the 7 pastors ... what ... \$150.00...

## Equity for ALL Behind the Wire – and Chaplains

Gentlemen and ladies – goodness – we should reward those who STAY. That is pro-active. Do not try to bribe the weak who would leave. What proof is there that that bribing the weak works? To operate from a standpoint of fighting to retain fly-by-night folks who WOULD leave without a pay raise is putting OUR money on the weakest element in TDCJ, not the strongest. One is trying to cater to the LESS loyal at the expense of the loyal. We are a TEAM

### Together Everyone Achieves More

and need rewarded as such. Reward the productive! Indeed, reward those who have *already* accomplished your goal! Reward those like the Gib Lewis Unit who go beyond themselves to solve their own problems, like on our unit and a few others. If all did what we did, there would be *no meat* to the most significant rationale for this \$450 million expenditure proposal.

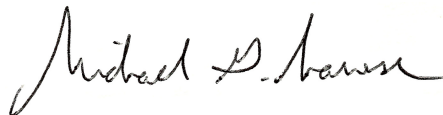
I say raise it to \$750 million for all the TDCJ staff *under* the wardens **BEHIND THE WIRE**. Or, save bunches and reward the 5 or 6 prisons that have DONE precisely what that \$450 million is trying to solve – *already* – by raising the salaries of all **Behind the Wire** at the Gib Lewis Unit and other 5 units by **30%**,<sup>1</sup> a reward for recruiting by hard-work tactics, self-initiative, and a zero marketing budget to gain 95% staffing, even 105% staffing a month! That might cost just \$50 million, 1/5, yes. And motivate others. Then add \$1.5 million to divide between those units for marketing and SEE what happens when pro-activity meets loyalty and sparks more initiative across the state.

If you REWARD hard work and those who STAY, see then if the other 90+ TDCJ Units do not step up to the plate and do the same. But goodness ... do not reward or try to bribe the weak and cater to the fly-by-night. Goodness, reward ALL **Behind the Wire**.

And Chaplains too – who deal with inmates as much as officers, often in their most vulnerable times as when they have deaths in their families, but who also help the officers, and help the families of all – just 100+ Chaplains who are responsive to 170,000 prisoners AND their families. And we need the third stage, 50 Chaplain **IIs** to Chaplain **IIIs**. See the links below for documentation. Chaplains recover their entire operating cost and deserve professional equity with the other degree-bearing professional within TDCJ. Including chaplains in the equitable officer-staff pay raise and including the smidgeon of upgrade for 50 Chaplain **IIs** to **IIIs** is normative, especially given since MHMR has been utilizing Chaplain **IIIs** for for decades.

This is an extraordinary opportunity to do the right thing – for the strong and most loyal in TDCJ.

Sincerely,



Dr. Michael G. Maness, Owner Michael G. Maness LLC  
Senior Chaplain, Gib Lewis Unit, Woodville, Texas

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#### References:

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[www.PreciousHeart.net/chaplaincy/Unit\\_Employee\\_Pay.htm](http://www.PreciousHeart.net/chaplaincy/Unit_Employee_Pay.htm)

[www.PreciousHeart.net/chaplaincy/Performance\\_MeasuresSAO-2000.pdf](http://www.PreciousHeart.net/chaplaincy/Performance_MeasuresSAO-2000.pdf) - Governor's own document

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<sup>1</sup> Handled through step increases for all on those units, moved up three (3 or 4) steps, since all or most are on step one.