

California Legislature

May 29, 2007

The Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor, State of California
State Capitol, First Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

We are writing to express some reservations with the direction of the contract negotiations between the Department of Personnel Administration (DPA) and the California Correctional Peace Officers Association (CCPOA) and encourage you to closely monitor the progress of these negotiations.

On May 10, 2007 DPA wrote a letter to the Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) requesting a federal mediator and/or a declaration of impasse as a means to end the pending contract negotiations with CCPOA. PERB responded on May 17, 2007 by declaring an initial impasse and directing the parties to continue discussions through mediation. Having an agreed upon mediator could help jumpstart these negotiations. However, the formal mediation process DPA triggered under Government Code Section 3518 has the potential to have the exact opposite effect by having the looming threat of formal impasse potentially only weeks away. It will be important for DPA to clearly communicate that their goal is to reach an agreement and not just rush to declare formal impasse.

In addition, court receiver Robert Sillen's recent request to expand his authority to include hiring, recruiting and retaining of correctional officers has the potential for the state to lose even more fiscal control of our prison system. Hiring, recruitment and retention issues should be addressed at the bargaining table and controlled by the state. The very real potential for court intervention makes the tenor of these negotiations extremely delicate. The only way to get a resolution that will avoid court intervention is for there to be face to face negotiations between the two parties.

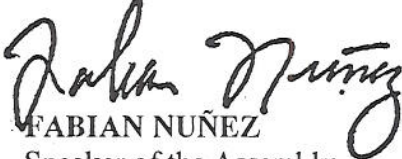
We share the same concern in how to address the prison crisis in California. The bipartisan passage of AB 900 was a good start.

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But we all know that for the reforms contained in AB 900 to work, there needs to be a better working relationship between the management of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) and the employees that work in the prison system. The result of these bargaining negotiations will set the stage for how that relationship progresses.

We appreciate your attention to this very important matter and we encourage you to do what you can to ensure productive face to face negotiations occur as soon as possible.


Sincerely,



FABIAN NUÑEZ
Speaker of the Assembly



DON PERATA
President pro Tempore of the Senate



MIKE VILLINES
Assembly Republican Leader



DICK ACKERMAN
Senate Republican Leader