

# STATE OF RHODE ISLAND



## Department of Corrections

Wayne T. Salisbury Jr., Director  
40 Howard Avenue  
Cranston, RI 02920

Tel: (401) 462-2611  
Fax: (401) 462-3953

The Honorable Louis P. DiPalma  
Senate Committee on Finance  
Rhode Island State House  
Providence, RI 02903

May 12, 2026

### **Re: S2839- Relating to Public Officers and Employees - Retirement System- Contributions and Benefits**

Dear Chairperson DiPalma:

This evening the Senate Committee on Finance will consider Senate Bill #2839. This legislation would add the positions of deputy chief inspector and inspector to RIGL § 36-10-9.2, the correctional officer pension schedule. This legislation is essential to ensure that the retirement benefits of correctional officers are not adversely impacted when they are hired as an inspector or deputy chief inspector, which currently requires a shift from one pension schedule to another.

This legislation has been requested annually since 2023 and passed the Senate last year. It is critical to address a major discrepancy between the pension schedules assigned to correctional officers and inspectors. The difference in pension impact, using the example of a correctional officer with 20 years of service accepting an Inspector position, is estimated at approximately \$50,000 annually when accounting for salary, benefits, and health coverage.

This pension discrepancy is a significant barrier to internal promotion within the Rhode Island Department of Corrections (RIDOC) and places the Office of Inspections, which is RIDOC's internal affairs unit, at a disadvantage due to a lack of correctional experience on the team. The perspective of correctional officers serving in this role is critical to efficient and informed investigations and to the transfer of institutional knowledge and practices to this team.

The Office of Inspections is currently comprised of five inspectors and a deputy chief inspector as well as the chief inspector. Over the last two years, the Department has had three correctional staff serve as inspectors in an acting capacity. Two of the three opted not to apply for the permanent position when it was posted due principally to the concerns related to the impact on their pension benefits. One correctional staff member applied and accepted the position but is considering returning to her previous role within the six months allotted to do so due to the expected pension impact. It is important to note that aside from this staff member, all other inspectors, including the deputy chief inspector and chief

The mission of RIDOC is to maintain a safe and secure correctional system that prioritizes the well-being of staff, incarcerated individuals, and the community. We strive to achieve this by promoting a respectful work environment, utilizing data-driven practices to guide decisions, and offering a wide range of programs to facilitate successful reintegration into the community and reduce recidivism.

inspector, are retired from outside law enforcement agencies with no previous state service and unlikely to achieve 25 years of service.

If a correctional officer were to accept such a promotion to the role of inspector, it creates significant administrative complexity when personnel move between different retirement systems. For example, the state must move a correctional officer (a member of the correctional officer retirement pension schedule) who accepts a promotion to Inspector into the traditional state retirement system pension schedule. If that Inspector were later promoted to Chief Inspector, the state will have to move them back into the correctional officer retirement pension schedule. This legislation would not have a retroactive effect.

Despite the name of the statute “Retirement on service allowance – Correctional Officers”, not all the original titles in the statute are members of the Rhode Island Brotherhood of Correctional Officers (RIBCO) and have always included some titles who are not or never were correctional officers. Additionally, several job titles within the statute are not part of the correctional officer hierarchy, including associate director, and classification counselor. Most of these associate director positions have little to no inmate contact, none are in RIBCO, and none of them require graduation from the correctional officer training academy. Therefore, excluding an Inspector from the system simply because an Inspector is not a correctional officer is illogical and inconsistent with existing statutory structure.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Wayne T. Salisbury Jr.".

Wayne T. Salisbury Jr.  
Director

cc: The Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Finance  
The Honorable Matthew L. LaMountain  
Kristen Silvia, Director of Legislation and Deputy Chief of Staff