



## National Association of Government Employees

AFFILIATED WITH THE SERVICE EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION

October 18, 2011

Senator Katherine Clark, Chair  
Representative John Scibak, Chair  
Joint Committee on Public Service  
State House, Room 156  
Boston MA 02144

Dear Senator Clark and Representative Scibak:

On behalf of the court officers of the Trial Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, we ask you to report favorably on House Bill 690, an act relative to defining employees classified in Group 4. The bill would amend the current pension system, which hurts those of us who face a high risk of injury, illness and premature death but are classified differently than those who perform more high-profile public safety jobs.

Court officers handle more rapists, child molesters, gang members, drug dealers, addicts and murderers in a single week than most public safety employees will see in a lifetime. We will be exposed to AIDS, hepatitis, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases on a daily basis. Each person we handle in court is having the worst day of his or her life, and that sad fact can lead to unpredictable violence.

Our risks don't end when we leave the courthouse. Many of us work in the communities where we live. The people we deal with in court are on the train ride home from work with us, in the shopping malls where we go with our families, and on the ball fields where we bring our children. We run into these offenders out in our communities, only without the meager protections we have in the workplace.

Our brother and sister court officers are a vital link in the chain of custody, from police officers to court officers to correctional facilities and back to court. We protect judges, court employees, and the public from the worst offenders under the worst staffing shortages any of us can remember. We face the same stressors that police officers and correctional officers do—yet, unlike them, we do not get Group 4 pension benefits to care for our families. We ask you to correct that systematic unfairness and add us to Group 4.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Abbott', written over a white background.

David Abbott  
President, NAGE Local 228/MACO