



**Maryland Classified Employees Association, inc.**

## **MCEA Press Release**

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Contact: Vanessa DiDomenico, *Director of Communications*

7127 Rutherford Road, Baltimore, MD 21244 \* 410-298-8800 \* 1-888-611-MCEA, x211

*Marilyn J. Miller, President*

*David G. Boschert, Executive Director*

# **State Ignores Victims of Illegal Strip Search**

MCEA (the oldest and largest independent labor organization serving Maryland public employees) continues to take proactive measures with the strip searches that were performed illegally last year on some of its members and state workers. On August 12, 2008, nine employees of the Maryland Correctional Training Center were illegally and improperly subjected to strip searches as a result of a drug screening procedure designed to reduce contraband being brought into the prison. At the time, prison officials acknowledged that the strip searches were performed after wand tests showed no traces of drugs, and that no contraband was ever found on any of the affected employees.

Five months later, these employees have had no meaningful response from the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services. On January 22, 2009, Delegates Christopher Shank, District 2B, LeRoy Myers, Jr., District 1C, and Andrew Serafini, District 2A wrote to Secretary Gary Maynard of DPSCS, expressing their concern that the affected employees "have heard little from the Maryland Division of Corrections about this traumatic incident that all agreed was mishandled by the Division." They have demanded immediate attention to this unacceptable situation.

The Maryland Classified Employees Association, Inc. is pursuing a grievance on behalf of those whose rights were violated, but the case has progressed to date without any formal response at all from the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services. As a result, on February 4, 2009, the employees directed the Department of Budget and Management to refer the matter to the Office of Administrative Hearings for an evidentiary hearing on the complaints raised by the employees who were strip searched. A hearing will be scheduled before an administrative law judge.

The Division of Corrections Internal Investigations Unit has completed its investigative report into the events of August 12, 2008. A copy of the report, which totals 361 pages, has been requested by several of the employees who were the subject of the strip searches. On Friday, February 6, 2009, the first of those employees finally received a response from the IIU. The employee was advised that the employee was not considered a "person of interest" with an enhanced right of access to the record in this case." The Internal Investigative Unit also denied the request citing security reasons, but did not offer to permit inspection of that part of the record that is reasonably severable. The denied employee is considering filing for administrative or judicial review of the refusal of IIU to provide access to the investigative report.

More information about MCEA is available at [www.mcea.org](http://www.mcea.org). For additional information, please call Vanessa DiDomenico (MCEA Communications Director) at 1-888-611-MCEA, ext. 211.

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