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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 5, 2016

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DOC Secretary Announces Targeted Wage Increases to Enhance Security Staff Recruitment and Retention

*Correctional Officers, Correctional Sergeants, Youth Counselors, and Youth Counselor-Advanced Employees
will receive wage increase under new pay system*

MADISON – Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) Secretary Jon Litscher today announced several changes to the pay structure for correctional employees as part of a department-wide effort to increase retention of DOC employees in critical areas. The announcement comes during Correctional Employees Week, which has been proclaimed by Governor Scott Walker to celebrate the contributions of DOC employees in ensuring public safety.

DOC has authority under the 2015 – 2017 State Compensation Plan to develop a pay system for correctional officers, correctional sergeants, youth counselors, and youth counselor-advanced employees with the overall goal of strengthening recruitment and retention of employees in these classifications.

Nearly 20% of correctional officers and sergeants are currently eligible for retirement, with 35% eligible for retirement within 5 years, and 54% eligible for retirement within 10 years. Due to the large number of expected retirements over the next decade, DOC is increasing pay for correctional officers, correctional sergeants, youth counselors, and youth counselor-advanced employees to increase recruitment of candidates and retention of existing employees.

“Ensuring the safety and security of correctional institutions is our top priority,” said Secretary Litscher. “Correctional officers and youth counselors work directly with inmates and youth every day, providing critical services that enable correctional institutions to run effectively and facilitating a wide range of programming, treatment, and educational opportunities for inmates and youth. These changes will increase DOC’s ability to recruit and retain qualified employees to fill critically important positions at the Department of Corrections.”

The changes are as follows:

- Starting June 26, 2016, correctional officers, correctional sergeants, youth counselors, and youth counselor-advanced employees will receive an \$0.80 per hour wage increase;
- From May 29, 2016 to January 7, 2017, correctional officers, correctional sergeants, youth counselors, and youth counselor-advanced employees employed by Waupun Correctional Institution, Green Bay Correctional Institution, Columbia Correctional Institution, and Copper Lake School/Lincoln Hills School will receive a \$0.50 per hour wage add-on; and

(continued on next page)

- DOC will begin identifying candidates for Discretionary Merit Compensation (DMC) awards, which will be issued to employees before the end of the current state fiscal year. DOC employees not receiving a wage increase or wage add-on who have meritorious service are potentially eligible for a DMC award.

The wage increase will raise the starting wage for correctional officers and youth counselors to \$16.00 per hour and the starting wage for correctional sergeants and youth counselor-advanced employees to \$16.76 per hour. The average wage for correctional officers and youth counselors will rise to \$19.17 per hour, while the average wage for correctional sergeants and youth counselor-advanced employees will rise to \$22.65 per hour.

The wage increase and wage add-on are expected to cost approximately \$10 million annually, which will be covered with existing funds. DOC has budgeted \$1.1 million for DMC awards to DOC employees not receiving a wage increase or wage add-on who have meritorious service in state fiscal year 2016.

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