

**From:** "Touchette, Mike" <[Mike.Touchette@vermont.gov](mailto:Mike.Touchette@vermont.gov)>

**Date:** August 20, 2019 at 8:44:12 AM EDT

**To:** "Touchette, Mike" <[Mike.Touchette@vermont.gov](mailto:Mike.Touchette@vermont.gov)>

**Subject: Staffing in the VTDOC**

Good morning Team DOC,

I understand that there may be staff who are upset about this article: <https://www.wcax.com/content/news/Prison-staffing-not-a-problem-in-Vermont-554824921.html>

I want to take a moment and address this head on. I was asked to participate in this interview as there are a number of states that are in a staffing crisis, where they literally having nursing and maintenance workers running units. In some cases, there are no staff at all monitoring those units. Vermont, as I state, is not in the same situation as some of these other states.

That said, I stand firm on my commitment to you to make significant progress towards improving the recruitment and retention within the VTDOC. Overtime rates are still very high for Vermont staff. Staff are working way too many hours and I recognize that this not only impacts your personal and family lives, but also makes doing the work even more difficult when you are tired.

My comments in this interview were in no way intended to diminish the realities of the Vermont correctional staffing needs. I apologize if it was construed as failing to recognize that we still have a lot of work to do, because we do. We are fortunate that we are not in the crisis that other states are, but there is no doubt we have a a lot of opportunity to reduce the enormous amount of overtime here in Vermont.

In closing, and as I said from the onset of being appointed Commissioner, a top priority for me is to improve recruitment and retention while making the VTDOC the employer of choice. I stand by my quote in the article that DOC staff do incredible, life saving, heroes work!

Best,

Mike Touchette  
Agency of Human Services  
Commissioner  
Department of Corrections  
NOB 2 South  
Waterbury, VT 05671-2000  
Office (802) 241-0059