



# Massachusetts Correction Officers Federated Union

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Brothers and Sisters,

I would like to begin by wishing you and your families a happy, healthy, and safe New Year.

As we reflect on the past year, one truth stands above all others: 2025 tested our profession, our patience, and our resolve — and this union met that test head-on.

Across the Commonwealth, correction officers continued to report for duty in facilities that remain understaffed, increasingly dangerous, and under constant strain. Throughout it all, the Massachusetts Correction Officers Federated Union (MCOFU) stood firm in its responsibility to protect our members, our families, and the safety of the institutions we serve.

MCOFU has remained an active and respected voice on Beacon Hill. We participated in legislative discussions affecting correction officers, including workforce stability, staffing classifications, and recruitment challenges. We supported efforts to modernize hiring and training standards as one component of a broader strategy to address chronic staffing shortages.

We have made it clear that recruitment alone is not the solution. Retention, better working conditions, professional treatment and respect, and fair compensation that reflects your continued commitment despite all you continue to endure are the backbones to solving most of these problems.

We have utilized political capital to engage the Legislature and we have amplified our voices on social media and in the press to keep these critical issues front and center.

In 2025 MCOFU participated in critical legislative discussions aimed at establishing specific statutory consequences for inmates found in possession of or using synthetic drugs, as well as for those who assault a correctional officer, including the imposition of mandatory minimum sentences.

MCOFU also successfully fought to restore Group 4 retirement status for Correctional Officer Head Cooks and Chefs. Additionally, the Union played a key role in defeating COAST legislation during this legislative session, protecting the rights, safety, and working conditions of our members.

This year, we used every resource at our disposal to sound the alarm on the escalating crisis of weapons and drug smuggling inside our facilities. Synthetic cannabinoids, fentanyl, Suboxone, and other dangerous substances are entering our prisons at unprecedented levels, placing officers and inmates alike at serious risk.

When officers were exposed, hospitalized, and injured, this union refused to remain silent. We publicly demanded stronger contraband enforcement, clear exposure protocols, and real accountability from the Department of Correction. Our position was unmistakably clear: no officer should ever be expected to work without proper protections, training, and policies in place. Safety is not optional; it is non-negotiable!

Unfortunately, this past year also marked a period of heightened tension between the union and the Department of Correction. In response to ongoing disputes, the union pursued legal action; a step that reflects the seriousness of the issues involved.

Throughout 2025, MCOFU did exactly what a union is meant to do: we held leadership accountable when responses fell short, and we have filed almost two dozen lawsuits when our rights were violated.

Whether it was poor communication following serious safety incidents, failure to address emerging threats within facilities, or dismissive attitudes toward frontline concerns, this union pushed back, consistently and forcefully. We raised concerns both publicly and privately because silence in the face of danger is not leadership; it is negligence.

When necessary, we escalated. And we will continue to escalate whenever the safety, dignity, or livelihoods of our members are placed at risk; so much so that for the first time in the history of MCOFU, the entire Executive Board were given suspensions for vigorously advocating for the safety of our membership. We will continue to face and defend ourselves against whatever consequences come our way in our pursuit to protect each and every one of us.

To be clear, our goal is not conflict for conflict's sake, and as we embark on the year ahead, our primary administrative agenda item as an organization is to return to a relationship with administration that is productive, constructive, and looks to work towards mutually beneficial resolutions to the challenges we will continue to face in 2026 and beyond. It is our sincere hope that we will be joined in that endeavor.

In 2025, we honored those who passed away, recognized members who dedicated decades of service to the Commonwealth, and supported one another through loss and hardship. This union is more than contracts and grievances; it is a brotherhood and sisterhood built on shared sacrifice and mutual respect.

As we move forward, the mission of MCOFU remains clear:

- To fight for safe working conditions
- To demand respect for correction officers
- To protect jobs, benefits, and dignity
- To ensure decisions about corrections include the voices of those who work behind the walls
- To continuously demand that the DOC bargain in good faith
- To increase health and welfare benefits
- To aggressively negotiate a fair three-year successor contract

2025 reminded us that progress is never handed to us; it is earned.

It is earned because this union stands together, speaks with one voice, and refuses to back down when it matters most.

In Solidarity,

Dennis Martin  
President, MCOFU

