

# **PRESS RELEASE**

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## **RI Council 94 AFSCME Calls for Action to Protect the Public & Training School Staff**

**North Providence – Today, Rhode Island Training School Local 314, Rhode Island Council 94, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO issued the following statement addressing continuing concerns about safety and security at the Training School and out in the community at large.**

**Steve Shears, President of Local 314, stated, “We have met with DCYF administration on numerous occasions over the last year with our safety proposals, yet little progress has been made. Our highly competent staff are regularly injured due to assaults and insufficient equipment and staffing. Another problem is that RITS Staff lacks sufficient equipment/facilities to separate known rival gangs. Due to the administration’s resistance to providing protective tools, such as body armor, O.C. Pepper Foam, and safe rooms, it’s only a matter of time until another RITS staff member is grievously injured.”**

**President Shears continued, “Local 314 has repeatedly pointed out that DCYF’s rush to place juveniles, many of whom have committed serious crimes, back into the community has eroded public safety. In 2007 RI Training School housed approximately 150 juveniles. Today, the Training School houses around 50 juveniles.”**

**President Shears concluded, “In the face of overwhelming odds, our uniformed professional staff are struggling to maintain the safety and security of the Training School. Local 314 urges the Governor and General Assembly to take swift action to protect the public/state employees and avert another crisis.”**