



2025: A Year in Review

Hello, fellow union members. This is Michael Clowes, Vice President of Lodge #88 in Nebraska. 2025 was a very tiring, arduous year for all of us, between the work schedule changes at multiple facilities, overtime shortages, both due to additional staffing and the Governor's need to reduce the budget, and just overall uneasy changes being made. I understand that quite a few of you would like to know what is going on with the union, but do not have the time to attend board meetings. What follows is a brief review of things that the Union is working on and has been doing in the year 2025.

1. Pension – We are currently working with Senator Bostar, trying to find the appropriate avenue to change the corrections retirement style from a 401k to a pension. We have identified a hybridized pension that would work well for the change over process from 401k to said pension. The next step we are taking is to find an actuary who can run the figures on how much it would cost to make this change. Please be aware that this is a long road, with progress taking a long time.
2. Blue Cross & Blue Shield – The National FOP Health trust is putting together a Blue Cross & Blue Shield insurance package for our FOP members in lodge #88, including the cost to the state. We are hoping the numbers come back with savings to the State, as we all know, if it costs more, the State will not take the deal. Looking at the benefit provided, Blue Cross would be an amazing insurance option, added next to the current United health care insurance.
3. LB 608 – President Jay Wilson and Vice President Michael Clowes attended the discussion at the State Capital, arguing for the passing of the bill. LB 608 states: This bill expands the First Responder Recruitment and Retention Act to include correctional officers, youth detention officers, eligible disabled persons, and their children in tuition waiver programs at state universities, state colleges, and community colleges. The bill broadens the definition of "first responders" to include correctional and youth detention officers and creates a new category of "eligible disabled persons" who can no longer work as first responders due to job-related injuries. First responders and eligible disabled persons can receive tuition waivers for up to five years for associate or bachelor's degree programs, and their qualifying children can also receive tuition waivers. The bill requires recipients to reside in Nebraska for five years after using the tuition waiver and file annual tax returns to prove residency. For correctional and youth detention officers, the tuition waiver provisions will only take effect on July 1, 2027, and will initially only be available at state universities.
4. Commission of Industrial Relations (CIR) – In February of 2025, a trial was made to include training specialists into the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge #88. Due to the extensive additional training, instructorship and qualifications required to properly train correctional employees, it was determined that this is the best path forward for all affected parties. We are still awaiting results and a CIR ruling to determine their position, but the outlook is good. After waiting approximately five years, it has finally

been determined that Corrections Case Managers will be covered under the FOP Union. The decision was made and not appealed (finally), bringing them under our Union. Next steps will be an emergency (unplanned) bargaining between the FOP and state to determine the specifics (wages, benefits, etc.)

5. Outreach to News Media – President Jay Wilson had been reached out to on four separate occasions, to speak about different subjects. On three of the occasions, it was about the ICE/WEC conversion in McCook. The fourth conversation was regarding overtime through the lens of a correctional officer through the Flatwater Free Press.
6. UNL Class Outreach – On September 17th, a UNL Social Justice class requested President Wilson, as well as other executive board members, to attend a class as a speaker, to gain insight into a correctional officers' day to day duties, as well as the effect prisonization has on incarcerated individuals. President Wilson, Secretary DeMary and Vice President Clowes attended the class.
7. Barbeques – In the spirit of giving back to our Union family, barbeques have begun, to feed staff working at facilities. On October 16th and 17th, the Union had a barbecue at the Nebraska State Penitentiary. The smoker took longer than expected to finish cooking the pulled pork, so second shift and third shift were fed first, with first shift being fed on the second day. On November 24th, Tecumseh State Correctional Institution was visited by Executive Board members, to feed the staff as well. Two days later, the 36th, Community Correctional Center – Lincoln was also visited for the barbecue. It is expected that this event will continue to all facilities in the coming year.

Day to Day Work

During the year of 2025, there were also many day-to-day tasks being accomplished. In an effort to shorten the list, as follows, were the combination of the President and Vice President attendance. These numbers do not include trustees or stewards' efforts, which are immeasurable in worth, as the official numbers were not calculated:

- 75 Facility Tours. There were six cancelled labor management meetings, due to having no agenda at the facility (which is a good thing). These cancelled labor management meetings did not have tours attached with them.
- 33 Statement of Charges / Notice of Allegations Representation
- 6 Investigation Representations
- 13 Step 1 Grievances Hearings
- 7 Step 2 Appeals
- 10 New Hire Orientations

From the offices of Keating O' Gara, our attorneys also represented:

- 77 Statement of Charges / Notice of Allegations Representation
- 4 Investigation Representations
- 30 Step 1 Grievance Hearings: 4 Won at this stage of appeal (NOA removed & investigation ended, 20-day suspension reduced to 5-day suspension, reduction of 5-day suspension to 1-day suspension, reversal of being forced to flex schedule in order to reduce OT – employee was given pay for the denied OT)

- 10 Step 2 Hearings: 5 Won at this stage of appeal (removed 6-month probation, 3 termination reversals, & a reversal of demotion)
- 8 Arbitrations: 7 Won (6% reduction in pay reversed, reversal of denial of step pay raise, 3 termination reversals, & 3 reversals of 20-day suspensions)
- 1 settlement
- Received the decision from a 2024 Arbitration in Jan of 2025 (reversing termination & ordering backpay)

Financial Stewardship

Quite a few members ask, "where is my money going?" to us. To be clear, close to one third of all members' dues go towards paying Keating O'Gara, a law firm, who house fantastic and hard-working attorneys, who are consistently going to bat for us every day (see above). On top of the attorneys working for us, Mr. Gary Young leads the charge. With decades of experience, Mr. Young has represented the interests of FOP Lodge #88 since its' inception. He is an invaluable asset, particularly during bargaining times with the state.

Another portion of money goes towards training sessions, to acquaint and orient trustees and stewards, with how to file grievances, manage their perspectives and prepare them for eventualities that may come into play while defending their facility union members. The training sessions are also paid for executive board members, who further their knowledge and understanding, making them more effective in their respective positions, at the bargaining table and how to manage various other duties that may arise within the union. Lastly, membership dues are saved. When the current leadership began, the number of monies being saved, with the best interest percentages in banks, Certificates of deposit, and overall futures, were close to nothing. As this is a public message, the current amount of money increases due to financial stewardship and wise decisions will not be posted here. However, it is substantial. Should you desire to see the amounts, a treasurer report is consistently available to members through our website, nebraskafop88.com. Simply log in with your member number (located on the back of your FOP 88 card), to view. If you do not have a card yet, email Secretary DeMary at fopne88secretary@gmail.com to obtain your member number.

Corrections Case Managers

As of December 17th, 2025, Correctional Case Managers are now covered under the FOP 88 Union! We are still finding the time to bargain with the state to hammer out the details when it comes to how this will look for Case Managers, so until that happens, please continue to follow all of the policies that you have been following, and wait to hear from us. We are so proud to have you join our Union, welcome!