



In court letter, backer of retired trooper charged in OT scandal blasts prosecution as a 'travesty'



By [Travis Andersen](#)

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A Charlton woman has written a strongly worded letter in support of retired State Police Lieutenant David W. Wilson, who's slated to plead guilty Jan. 29 to a federal embezzlement charge in connection with the agency's overtime scandal.

The author, retired Worcester Public Schools teacher Ruth Beringer, submitted her letter to US District Court in Boston, where Wilson is charged with embezzlement for allegedly stealing \$12,450 in overtime pay for hours he didn't work in 2016. Prosecutors are recommending a prison sentence of six months to one year, in addition to restitution of \$12,450, under terms of a plea agreement.

Wilson, 58, is among 10 current and former troopers who [face federal and state](#) criminal charges for allegedly falsifying payroll records and submitting phony "ghost" traffic citations to collect thousands of dollars for work never performed.

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Beringer, who's a close friend of Wilson's wife, Carolyn, began her letter by lamenting the flurry of negative press coverage aimed at the now-[disbanded](#) Troop E of the State Police, which patrolled the Pike.

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“There has been an absolute media frenzy regarding Troop E and the overtime abuse scandal,” Beringer wrote. “It’s as if all State Police are corrupt. This works well with the social trend to disrespect all police and it simply must stop.”

Beringer went on to praise Wilson for his “meritorious service” over a 32-year career and credited him for his community involvement. She also posted the letter to her Facebook page.

“He coached Lacrosse at the local high school, fostered more than 50 children at his home and recently adopted two of them,” she wrote.

Beringer claimed it was understood that troopers could leave overtime shifts early if they met their quota of traffic stops. “If Lt. Wilson finished his quota, he would relieve the desk officer and go in early for his regular shift,” Beringer wrote.

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A State Police spokesman didn’t immediately respond to a request for comment on Beringer’s characterization of overtime protocols.

Beringer maintained that “how [Wilson] did his job was status quo” and said he agreed to plead guilty under “extreme duress” of the prospect of a lengthier prison term.

“Who has been in charge of monitoring payroll and supervision of shifts for the last 50 years?” Beringer wrote. “This behavior has been ongoing and part of procedure throughout the Law enforcement community for as long as there has been a Mass. Pike. Why now? If you want to change a system, you change it moving forward. It makes no sense to crucify the men and women who have done their jobs as they have been trained to do.”

She described the prosecution of Wilson, a fellow Charlton resident who faces [related charges](#) in state court, as a “travesty.”

“If Lt. Wilson is guilty of anything, it’s of being a true workaholic and for providing for his family,” Beringer wrote. “As a registered voter and taxpayer, I desire to know how much money has been spent on this investigation to date and how much overtime has been paid and to whom.”

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The office of US Attorney Andrew E. Lelling declined to comment on Beringer's letter. Wilson's lawyer didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

Beringer said Friday in a phone interview that she and Carolyn Wilson are in the same prayer group, and the trooper's wife has been highly distressed over her husband's legal troubles.

"This is just not OK," Beringer said. "This is a really good man. He's an exceptionally good man, and just a wonderful person."

Matt Rocheleau, Maria Cramer, John R. Ellement, and Danny McDonald of the Globe Staff contributed to this report. Travis Andersen can be reached at travis.andersen@globe.com. Follow him on Twitter [@TAGlobe](https://twitter.com/TAGlobe).

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