

**From:** Roland Zullo [<mailto:rzullo@umich.edu>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 31, 2016 11:23 AM  
**To:** Gantert, Tom E. <[Gantert@mackinac.org](mailto:Gantert@mackinac.org)>  
**Subject:** Re: I'm Tom Gantert. I'm a reporter.

Dear Mr. Gantert,

You question whether the officer testimony was biased because the MCO was involved in recruitment. Possible, but unlikely. The five focus groups drew participants from over 30 facilities, and the expressed themes in the report were quite consistent. Read the report in full, note the detail of the testimony, and reflect on whether it was possible for the MCO to coordinate participant responses. Also, it could be argued that the involvement of the MCO was helpful in eliciting candor from participants because through this partnership we could assure anonymity and protection against any possible retaliation.

FYI, the statement below was read prior to each focus group:

**Introduction:**

Let me first thank you for helping with this study. My name is Roland Zullo and I am employed as a Research Scientist at the University of Michigan. With me is [ ], also from the University of Michigan.

Our discussion today will concern the contract for food services between Aramark and the Michigan Department of Corrections. You were asked to participate because of your seniority as an officer and understanding of prison operations. All of you were employed by the MDOC prior to the conversion from public to privatized meal service in late 2013.

We are interested in your candid views and observations. Keep in mind there are no right or wrong answers. Persons in this room might have differing points of view; that is fine. Your position on the Aramark contract might not be the same as the MDOC or your labor union; that too is fine. Please feel free to share your thoughts even though it differs from what others have said, or if different from official positions by MDOC or the MCO.

Before we begin let me layout some ground rules. Our focus group interview will use an open discussion format. We will also be recording the conversation to fully capture your statements. Please speak up. And please, only one person should speak at a time. You all have notepads and pens. If something occurs to you while another person is speaking write it down so that you can remember to mention it later.

We will be on a first name basis throughout the session. This information will be used to keep track of the conversation and not shared publicly. Future reports will not identify the person speaking. You may be assured of complete confidentiality.

We expect our session to last less than three hours, and we will not have a break. The rest rooms are [ ] and refreshments are [ ]. Feel free to leave the table for either of these if wish to stretch, but do so quietly.

Sincerely, Roland