



CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE OF MUNICIPALITIES

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TESTIMONY

of the

CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE OF MUNICIPALITIES

to the

JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

March 24, 2006

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities opposes **S.B. 548, "An Act Concerning the Award of Workers' Compensation for Scarring and Disfigurement"**

This bill would allow the workers' compensation commissioners increased authority to provide benefits for permanent scars or disfigurements, and also for permanent partial disability for certain body parts. It would increase the costs of workers' compensation in Connecticut. There are significant cost implications to this bill for both insured and self-insured entities.

The scarring and disfigurement awards were limited (amended in 1993) primarily to the head, face and neck because the Workers' Compensation Commissioners were awarding extreme rulings for scarring and disfigurement. The awards were made despite the fact that the scarring and disfigurement *did not* "handicap the employee in obtaining or continuing work". For example, in many heart related claims which resulted in open heart surgery, it was common to have a Commissioner award \$25,000 or more for just the scarring, in addition to the permanent partial disability award.

Landmark workers' compensation reform enacted over the past several years should be allowed to continue to work. The reforms were enacted to restore balance to the system and they have been instrumental in attracting and retaining businesses. This has allowed Connecticut to be a more competitive state in terms of its overall business climate. The existing system retains fairness and equity in servicing injured workers and it should be allowed to continue working towards that end.

Allowing for highly subjective compensation awards for any area of the body - including expanding discretion with regards to losses already covered - is an unnecessary burden to place on employers.

CCM urges the Committee to take no action on this bill.

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If you have any questions, please call Ron Thomas or Gian-Carl Casa of CCM at (203) 498-3000.