

3/14/2006

House bill 5740  
An Act Concerning Ergonomics and Workplace Safety

Good morning, and thank you for your time in hearing my concerns regarding house bill 5740. My name is Sherri Brooks and I am a service rep for AT&T formerly SBC and have been for the last 7 years. My primary job responsibility consists of answering incoming calls in a call center environment. I work 7 and 1/2 hours a day at my desk primarily typing and using a computer to navigate various systems in order to help my customers. As you can imagine a priority to my company is for me to take as many calls as possible in the shortest time possible. To my company the more calls I take the more customers I help or more importantly the more products and services I can sell. Working in a call center is a highly monitored position. My peers and I are constantly observed to ensure we are performing as efficiently as possible. Although I am entitled to my two 15 minute breaks and a lunch period any "other" time is constantly monitored. For these reasons it is very common that I have several hours of continuous typing between breaks.

About 18 months ago I began experiencing pain in both of my hands. At first I just ignored it but as it got worse I would typically treat it with over the counter medications. For the last year or so I have also been experiencing periodic numbness. There have been several nights where the pain and numbness have actually woken me up. I know that for me physical therapy and ultimately surgery are probably inevitable. This poses a major issue in my life because I am a single mother of two children and you can imagine that any type of surgery will be more than inconvenient.

It seems so clear to me, every employee should have the right to work in a safe environment. I'm sure that if my company had ensured that my work station was properly ergonomic I would not have developed this injury. It is my belief that companies should be required to ensure that all employees are educated in ergonomics. I know I wish I had been. I would like to thank you for your time and also ask for your consideration and support for this very important bill.

Sincerely,  
Sherri Brooks