



STATEMENT OF AT&T CONNECTICUT

**Regarding Raised Bill No. 7035
An Act Concerning Ergonomics and Workplace Safety
Before the Labor Committee
February 27, 2007**

Proposal:

Raised Bill No. 7035 would impose extensive new requirements on Connecticut employers regarding ergonomic related illnesses and injuries: These requirements would apply on top of current requirements and without regard for whether a company has an effective ergonomics policy or program in place.

Comments:

AT&T recognizes the important role of ergonomics in workplace safety and has in place an extensive and effective ergonomics policy and program, involving managers and employees.

AT&T works with the National Telecommunications Safety Panel and with the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration specific to ergonomics issues in telecommunications. The company's standards not only meet, but exceed federal standards.

The AT&T Ergonomics Program is designed to: reduce injuries associated with poor ergonomics; provide all employees with a productive, comfortable, safe and healthy work environment; meet or exceed applicable regulations and standards; apply ergonomic best practices; and educate all employees on the importance of ergonomics in the workplace. Ergonomics training that was developed with medical experts is tailored to an employee's work situation, whether that is in an office setting, a central office or working with the company's extensive outside plant. The company conducts thousands of ergonomics assessments each year, making adjustments with equipment and workstations to address Repetitive Motion Injuries (RMI) and Cumulative Trauma Disorder (CDT).

Raised Bill No. 7035 would ignore this program and require the company to put in place a different, but not necessarily more effective model. Mandating duplicative programs without first determining that a company's current program is inadequate, or that the new requirements will result in significant improvement, is akin to throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

Conclusion:

AT&T Connecticut opposes Raised Bill No. 7035 because it would unnecessarily increase the cost of doing business in Connecticut by imposing additional and duplicative requirements on Connecticut employers, without regard to whether programs already implemented by an employer are adequate or would be improved by the new requirements. If the Committee determines that legislation is necessary, AT&T respectfully requests that Raised Bill No. 7035 be amended to permit companies that have existing programs which meet the guidelines issued through the Occupational Safety & Health Administration Alliance Program to continue those programs without being subject to the separate requirements that would be imposed under this bill.

General Assembly
January Session, 2007

Raised Bill No. 7035
LCO No. 3403

AN ACT CONCERNING ERGONOMICS AND WORKPLACE SAFETY.

In line 46, insert the following after the word "employees":

, except for an employer that has in place a written ergonomic program, which meets or exceeds applicable industry or task specific ergonomic guidelines issued through the Occupational Safety & Health Administration Alliance Program