

Testimony in Support of Proposed S.B. 153
An Act Concerning Scarring Awards Under The Workers'
Compensation Act

Manuel Mourao

My name is Manuel Mourao. I live in Milford. I am 38 years old. I am presently self-employed, doing painting and wallpaper work. I have worked as a laborer all of my life.

On July 30, 1993, I was employed with Mansfield Construction Company. My employer had been hired to do a large paving job at the U.S. Surgical headquarters in Norwalk. We were spreading hot asphalt that had been unloaded by a dump truck. As I was standing behind the truck, the tailgate of the truck suddenly opened and I was buried in hot asphalt up to my thighs. The temperature of the asphalt was between 300-400°. It took about ten minutes to dig me out. I was in severe pain during that time, which was like a living hell.

I was taken by ambulance to Norwalk Hospital and I was then transferred to the Burn Unit at Bridgeport Hospital. I suffered second and third degree burns to both of my legs. I underwent three surgeries involving debridement and skin grafting. I had to wear Jobst garments on my legs every day for two years.

As a result of this work injury, I have permanent scarring and disfigurement to both of my legs. The areas are very sensitive to touch. My legs bruise easily if I bump into an object. My calves hurt all the time, and I get occasional sharp pains in my right leg. Because of my scars, I cannot sweat. My legs therefore get very hot and uncomfortable. I never wear shorts, however, even in hot weather, as I am very embarrassed by my scars.

I filed a workers' compensation claim for my injuries. My medical bills were paid and I was also compensated for the time that I lost from work. However, I was not able to receive any compensation benefits for the permanent scarring that I suffered to my legs because of the limitations imposed by C.G.S. Sec. 31-308(c), which went into effect shortly before my injury.

The present law is very unfair to someone like me who suffers a work injury that results in permanent significant scarring or disfigurement to an area of the body other than the face, head or neck. Proposed S.B. No. 153, if amended to include awards for scarring on any part of the body, would correct that injustice.