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Labor and Public Employees Committee
Workers' Compensation Public Hearing
Tuesday, January 30, 2007, 1:00 PM

Written Testimony of Joy C. Bylan, Workers' Compensation Consultant
Connecticut Employees Independent Union, SEUI Local 511
Municipal Employees Independent Union, SEIU Local 506

Senator Prague, Representative Ryan and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee:

On behalf of the Connecticut Employees Union Independent, the Municipal Employees Union Independent, Locals 511 and 506 of the Service Employees International Union, I wish to offer some brief comments about a few of the bills before you today.

I've been involved with Workers' Compensation claims on and off since the early 1970's. Unfortunately, I've seen the changes made in 1993 defeat the purpose for which Workers' Compensation was intended – to help working people who have sustained an injury that drastically affects their lives, livelihood and their families. I've worked with numerous third party administrators (State and Municipal) whose goal is to deny every claim, delay every claim and save money for their employer. Needless to say the employers and the insurance company were all in favor of saving money. I believe it is now time to rectify some of the mistakes which have been made.

S.B. 845 An Act Concerning Light Duty Work

Light duty is very important to an injured worker. It helps with the physical and mental transition back to work. Too often an injured worker feels alienated from his employer. While this bill does not strengthen the existing language, as many employers do not offer light duty at all, it does ensure the worker maintains work in a location and time usual to his regular work and is not discriminated against because he was injured.

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S.B. 847 An Act Concerning Additional Benefits for Wage Loss

We would advocate for this bill as there are many different circumstances where benefits cease under the present language and employees are unable to find other work.. Criteria such as age, nature of the injury, education and physical condition keep a permanently injured employee from finding other work.

S.B. 153 An Act Concerning Scarring Awards
Legislation in 1993 reduced the number and kinds of scarring awards considerably. It also placed a two-year cap on the ability to receive a scarring award. The time limit is very obscure to most injured workers and the elimination of the time limit would serve injured workers well.

Subject to drafting language, we would support bills that mandate claims be processed in a timely manner so that families are not left without an income.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony for your consideration.