

Order  
# 16

Testimony of Robert J. Enright, Esq.  
Former Chair, Connecticut Bar Association Workers' Compensation Section

Remarks before the Appropriations Committee on February 23, 2011 in support of adequate funding for Workers' Compensation Commission budget

I have represented employers and insurers for more than two decades, and while I have some quarrels with the Act and its administration, I am convinced of this: workers' rehabilitation lies at the heart of the Act; it is one of the chambers of that heart. Elimination of workers' rehabilitation services inflicts grave damage to the humanitarian heart of the Act.

That a fiscal crisis plagues Connecticut is irrefutable. This fact should not operate as a trump card to deflect attention from the dubious proposition that severe reductions in the workers' compensation budget will serve even in a small way to ameliorate that crisis. The Workers' Compensation Commission budget is, in fact, funded solely by assessments to employers and insurers.

The proposed reductions might serve instead, perversely, to create countervailing results: for example, responsibility for rehabilitation of injured workers might devolve upon state agencies—adding to the administrative and thus fiscal burdens upon those agencies. At a time when job creation is a critical policy issue, it makes no sense to throttle a channel by which injured individuals are reintegrated into the workforce.

I join those who respectfully request this honorable Legislature adequately to fund the budget of the Workers' Compensation Commission.

Thank you for allowing me to appear before the Appropriations Committee.