

Testimony of Becky McClain, Deep River , CT

Before the Labor and Public Employees Committee, Feb 24, 2011

Madam Chair/ Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. My name is Becky McClain. I am a resident of Deep River , CT. I am here today to support Bill No 986, AN ACT CONCERNING ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR AN EMPLOYER'S NOTICE TO DISPUTE CERTAIN CARE DEEMED REASONABLE FOR AN EMPLOYEE UNDER THE WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT.

I am injured worker from Connecticut . Through no fault of my own and even after raising several safety concerns of matters related to public health and safety, I was denied adequate safety protections and became injured.

I was injured because of a lack of worker safety rights and lack of safety regulations in CT. I was injured because of a willful and wanton disregard for safety by my previous employer, Pfizer at Groton Labs in Connecticut .

In addition to the lack of rights to work-place safety, I was denied medical care through WC because trade secrets superseded my rights to pertinent exposure information from a dangerous biological exposure I had incurred.

Consequently, I have a very personal understanding of the lack of rights that WC brings to injured workers who fall prey to unsafe work conditions in Connecticut.

Not only through my own personal experience of being denied directed healthcare, but through testimonies from other injured workers I have met, I have heard horrific stories of the lack of rights to adequate healthcare and the abuse against human dignity that WC brings to injured workers here in CT.

Amazingly, I recently witnessed an injured worker being denied healthcare while I was in a doctor's waiting room. This individual was dressed in his work uniform and was obviously in pain and needed care. But WC had stopped his physical therapy treatment without any justification. In front of all of us, he was told he would have to report to WC before being provided any more therapy, a therapy that the doctor had ordered. This individual limped out of the office obviously embarrassed. I was appalled.

Connecticut is developing a terrible reputation for worker rights to workplace safety and to adequate medical care to injured workers. And this is not good for business and it isn't good for Connecticut .

Sustained economic development is not a one way street. It is not only about creating jobs, but it involves treating workers with dignity and providing adequate safety and healthcare protections to workers. Connecticut 's disregard

or injured workers will detract families and quality workers from coming into the state and, in the long term, will hamper sustained economic development.

Bill # 986 delineates a remedy to one of the major problems within WC, that is, the denial of medical treatment prescribed by a physician to an injured worker without any justification. Passing this bill will be a first step in bringing adequate care to the injured worker. I wholeheartedly support Bill 986 and encourage you to do the same.

Thank you.

Becky McClain

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