

Big business and insurance company lobbyists have pressured some of our legislators to file a bill, House Bill 709, that is a **radical attack** on the rights of injured workers. The bill has many objectionable provisions, but here are some of the worst:

1. **With few exceptions, the bill limits both wage-loss and medical benefits to 500 weeks.** Imagine a 25 year-old man who loses a leg and cannot work. Under this bill, not only his wage-loss benefits but also his medical benefits will stop forever before he reaches age 35. What happens then? He turns to the government for support and becomes a charge of the taxpayer.
2. **The bill takes away the injured worker's right to medical privacy.** Imagine the insurance company's lawyer secretly picking up the phone and talking to your doctor about your treatment. Under this bill, the insurance company and its lawyer can talk to the injured worker's doctor at any time without asking the worker's permission or even notifying him before the call.
3. **The bill limits the injured worker's right to introduce medical evidence at a hearing.** The bill orders the judges at the Industrial Commission to completely disregard the opinions of any doctor who was not chosen by the insurance company. This bill completely strips the injured worker of his right to see a doctor for a second opinion about his treatment. The result is that the insurance company's doctor will have complete control of the injured worker's care.
4. **The bill further limits the worker's already-limited rights to select his or her own physician.** Under this bill, the injured worker has almost no right to change to a doctor he or she trusts. Again, the insurance company and the doctor it selects have complete control over the worker's medical care.

One effect of this bill will be to push injured workers onto government programs such as Social Security Disability, Medicare, and Medicaid. In other words, rather than providing benefits for injured workers through private insurance, **your tax dollars will be used instead!** As a result, the costs of paying benefits would be shifted from wealthy corporations and insurance companies to taxpayers like you, all during a time when government resources are scarce.

If you have been on workers' compensation before, you know what a struggle it can be to pay your bills on only two-thirds of your wages. Imagine if your benefits were terminated completely when you were still unable to work. If you have been on workers' compensation before, you know how frustrating it can be to get quality medical care. Imagine the insurance company having even more control over your treatment.

PLEASE ACT NOW! CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATORS IN THE STATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND THE SENATE AND TELL THEM THAT YOU DO NOT SUPPORT THIS BILL.

If you want more information or need the contact information of your legislator, please call MARTIN & JONES at 919-821-0005. We'll be happy to assist you in protecting the rights of North Carolina workers!

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