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Katz, Friedman, Eagle, Eisenstein, Johnson & Bareck, P.C.

77 W. Washington Street
20th Floor
Chicago, IL 60602-2904

Telephone: 312-263-6330
Fax: 312-372-5555
Toll Free in Illinois: 800-444-1525
National Toll Free: 888-626-5556
Website: www.kfeej.com

[Illinois Workers' Compensation Reform Part III](#)

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In our previous blog, we indicated that HB5424 would be the vehicle bill for proposed changes. We now know this is not the case. In an effort of legislative ledgerdmain, the “reform” of the Illinois Workers’ Compensation system does not yet have a vehicle bill to be called up. The reason for this is that the content of the bill is in constant flux and this author must now report that the word in Springfield is that the legislators are considering even more draconian changes which will impact on the injured worker in a very negative way. We now are advised that there could be a complete elimination of choice of doctor for the injured worker! The worker would be treated by the doctor chosen by his employer or insurance carrier Also, the legislators are considering using the AMA guidelines to determine the nature and extent of permanent disability. These guidelines do not take into account pain, the type of work performed, whether the injury prevents the worker from performing his usual and customary employment, the length of work life expectancy, which in effect ignores the potential lost income an injured worker is likely to suffer as a result of an accident. There are many other provisions on the table which would affect the ability of an injured worker to bring his/her claim to the workers’ compensation commission, but this author is most concerned about the provisions outlined above. Making Illinois an attractive State for business does not require that the business climate be improved by pushing injured workers into poverty or on to the State and Federal Social Welfare programs. Taxpayers should not bear the costs of workplace accidents, these are costs that are part of doing business in a global economy and rightly are borne by the industry causing the risk. Please contact your Illinois State Representative or State Senator to voice your opposition to the “reform” of the Illinois Workers’ Compensation Act. We need to return to the agreed bill process where labor and management can solve and problems together. The Illinois State legislature intends to act on this matter during this veto session. We have only a few days left in the session. Act now!