



Ankin Law Office LLC

Protecting the Rights of Injured Workers

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Illinois Workers' Comp Bill Passes



As we discussed in [recent posts](#), changes to Illinois' workers' compensation have been on the horizon for a few months now. One sticking point in recent drafts of the proposed legislation that was of great concern was the proposed change that would require workers to prove that the injuries for which they seek benefits were caused by work-related activity.

Last week, legislation amending the current workers' compensation system passed in the House on the second try by a vote of 62-43. Shortly thereafter, Governor Quin indicated that he had every intention of signing the legislation.

The good news is that the newly passed legislation did not include the requirement that workers prove that their injuries were job-related.

However, as explained in this Bloomberg BusinessWeek article, there were a number of changes made that would negatively impact the rights of injured workers under the compensation system:

The changes are supposed to cut between \$500 million and \$700 million from workers' compensation, which totals \$3 billion.

Medical fees will be reduced 30 percent. Payments for carpal tunnel syndrome will last only 28 1/2 weeks, instead of 40. New guidelines will govern what treatment injured workers can receive and make harder for intoxicated workers to win claims.

Employers can organize medical networks for handling workers' compensation cases...New arbitrators will serve three-year terms instead of six and will be barred from accepting gifts. Critics say arbitrators have been too "cozy" with workers and their lawyers.

Thus, although injured workers arguably dodged a bullet and the proposed changes that would have most seriously affected their rights were not enacted, the changes that were enacted are less than favorable when it comes to the rights of workers. That being said, until the changes have been implemented and in effect for a while, it will be difficult to predict the true effects of the changes.

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Howard Ankin of Ankin Law Office LLC (www.ankinlaw.com) handles [workers' compensation](#) and [personal injury cases](#). Mr. Ankin can be reached at (312) 346-8780 and howard@ankinlaw.com.

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