



Ankin Law Office LLC

Protecting the Rights of Injured Workers

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The Workers' Compensation System Should Not Be Used as a Scapegoat

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As the economy limps along, everyone is looking for someone, or something, to blame. Increasingly, workers' compensation programs have been targeted, with opponents portraying them as an unnecessary expense that undermines local businesses' attempts to survive in this challenging economic climate.

Critics of the workers' compensation system offer what appear to be, at first glance, convincing arguments that focus on the bottom line, while ignoring the important role the system plays in protecting the safety of workers. Headlines such these serve only to fuel the campaign against workers' compensation and generate confusion:

- [Workers' comp stands in way of job growth](#) (AuburnPub.com)
- [NCCI Workers' Comp Hike 'Bad News' for Small Businesses in Florida](#) (Sunshine State News)
- [Workers' comp is still costly](#) (TimesUnion.com).

Jon Gelman addresses this issue head on at his blog, [Workers' Compensation Law](#), explaining that business gain should never trump workers' safety:

Workers' Compensation has become a "scapegoat" for a failing American economy. As David J. DePaolo points out in his recent [blog](#), industry has raised the banner of reform in an effort to save dollars rather than to save workers' and their lives...

The financial downturn has resulted in an estimated 11% predicted falloff in the collection of premiums...Workers have become expendable as cheap and unskilled labor is now plentiful around the world...(and) (s)afety is considered an unnecessary expense...

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The century old experiment of workers' compensation should not be a culture based upon dollars alone...(This) country can have both, safe jobs and a robust economy.

Gelman is 100% correct. The safety of U.S. workers shouldn't be a mere afterthought, nor should the ailing economy be permitted to undermine the century old workers' compensation system. Businesses' desire to keep their heads above water during these difficult times is admirable and understandable, but should not come at the expense of the safety of the very people who make it possible for them to serve their customers. There is a happy medium between business interests and worker safety. Striking an appropriate balance will result in a safe, secure and productive workforce, thus allowing businesses to thrive.

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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