



Pennsylvania Federation of Injured Workers
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“An Injury to One is an Injury to All”

Date

Dear

I am contacting you as an injured worker supporter on behalf of injured workers throughout Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania Legislature has taken several cost-of-living raises since 1972 but has refused to give injured workers the same cost-of-living increase over the same period of time. It has been over 30 some years since injured workers have been given a cost-of-living increase.

Don't you think it is about time to give injured workers a cost of living raise?

Every year the Pennsylvania adjusts the “Statewide Average Weekly Wage” for workers compensation. This adjustment indicates the increase of the cost-of-living increase that occurs every year. It puzzles me and others as to why injured workers do not receive the same increase for each year they must be on workers compensation. They incur the same cost-of-living increase that all in Pennsylvania incur but their worker’s compensation benefits are not adjusted to compensate for that increase.

2007 Pennsylvania Statewide Average Weekly Wage

Released: L&I 01/01/2007

Pursuant to the Workers' Compensation Act, Section 105.1, the Department of Labor & Industry has determined the statewide average weekly wage for injuries occurring on and after January 1, 2007, shall be \$779.00 per week. For purposes of calculating the update to payments for medical treatment rendered on and after January 1, 2007, the percentage increase in the statewide average weekly wage is 4.6 percent.

Workers' Compensation Rate Schedules

Under the Workers' Compensation Act, injured workers are entitled to indemnity (wage-loss) benefits equal to two-thirds of their weekly wage for a work-related injury. However, there are minimum and maximum adjustments provided in the Act, and the benefit rate is set using the annual maximum in place at the time of injury. The maximum is based on the Department of Labor and Industry's calculation of the statewide average weekly wage.

The following schedules provide the weekly rates from calendar year 1993 to 2007. When referring to the schedules, read down the column for the calendar year during which the injury occurred.

For example, the maximum weekly compensation rate for calendar year 2007 is \$779.00. The second block represents the weekly compensation rate to be 66 2/3 percent of the employee's average weekly wage if the average weekly wage falls between \$1,168.50 and \$584.26. The third block reflects a weekly compensation rate of \$389.50 if the employee's average weekly wage is between \$584.25 and \$432.78. The last block is 90 percent of the employee's average weekly wage if his/her average weekly wage is \$432.77 or less.

I have listed below the increases to the PA Statewide Average Weekly Wage from the year 2000 to 2007 so you can see the increases to the cost-of-living increases. The chart shows that over just a couple of years the increase is significant.

Maximum: \$779.00 01/01/07
Maximum: \$745.00 01/01/06
Maximum: \$716.00 01/01/05
Maximum: \$690.00 01/01/04
Maximum: \$675.00 01/01/03
Maximum: \$662.00 01/01/02
Maximum: \$644.00 01/01/01
Maximum: \$611.00 01/01/2000

An injured worker that suffered a serious work injury and is unable to return to work for several years will incur a pretty good size cost-of-living but does not get compensated for that increase. This is not fair! *Not allowing for a COLA for injured workers does not fulfill the workers compensation mandate, that was established when the agreement between labor and industry was created. Just another breach of agreement!*

I ask you to consider the well being of injured workers and help them cope with their financial struggle while on worker's compensation. There are two bills buried in committee that address the COLA for injured workers. I ask you to review these bills and get them headed for consideration by the Legislature.

Yours truly,