As Reported by the House Public Insurance and Pensions Committee

136th General Assembly
Regular Session **Am. H. B. No. 81**
2025-2026

Representative Stewart
Cosponsors: Representatives Miller, J., Roemer

A BILL

To amend sections 4121.12, 4121.121, 4121.13, 4121.41, 4121.45, 4123.44, 4123.52, 4123.54, 4123.57, 4123.66, 4125.07, 4133.10, 4167.01, 4167.10, and 5145.163 and to repeal sections 4167.25, 4167.27, and 4167.28 of the Revised Code to make appropriations for the Bureau of Workers' Compensation for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2027, to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of the Bureau's programs, and to make changes to the Workers' Compensation Law.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:

Section 1. That sections 4121.12, 4121.121, 4121.13, 4121.41, 4121.45, 4123.44, 4123.52, 4123.54, 4123.57, 4123.66, 4125.07, 4133.10, 4167.01, 4167.10, and 5145.163 of the Revised Code be amended to read as follows:

Sec. 4121.12. (A) There is hereby created the bureau of workers' compensation board of directors consisting of eleven members to be appointed by the governor with the advice and

consent of the senate. One member shall be an individual who, on account of the individual's previous vocation, employment, or affiliations, can be classed as a representative of employees; two members shall be individuals who, on account of their previous vocation, employment, or affiliations, can be classed as representatives of employee organizations and at least one of these two individuals shall be a member of the executive committee of the largest statewide labor federation; three members shall be individuals who, on account of their previous vocation, employment, or affiliations, can be classed as representatives of employers, one of whom represents self-insuring employers, one of whom is a state fund employer who employs one hundred or more employees, and one of whom is a state fund employer who employs less than one hundred employees; two members shall be individuals who, on account of their vocation, employment, or affiliations, can be classed as investment and securities experts who have direct experience in the management, analysis, supervision, or investment of assets and are residents of this state; one member who shall be a certified public accountant; one member who shall be an actuary who is a member in good standing with the American academy of actuaries or who is an associate or fellow with the casualty actuarial society; and one member shall represent the public and also be an individual who, on account of the individual's previous vocation, employment, or affiliations, cannot be classed as either predominantly representative of employees or of employers. The governor shall select the chairperson of the board who shall serve as chairperson at the pleasure of the governor.

None of the members of the board, within one year immediately preceding the member's appointment, shall have been

employed by the bureau of workers' compensation or by any person, partnership, or corporation that has provided to the bureau services of a financial or investment nature, including the management, analysis, supervision, or investment of assets.

(B) Of the initial appointments made to the board, the governor shall appoint the member who represents employees, one member who represents employers, and the member who represents the public to a term ending one year after June 11, 2007; one member who represents employers, one member who represents employee organizations, one member who is an investment and securities expert, and the member who is a certified public accountant to a term ending two years after June 11, 2007; and one member who represents employers, one member who represents employee organizations, one member who is an investment and securities expert, and the member who is an actuary to a term ending three years after June 11, 2007. Thereafter, terms of office shall be for three years, with each term ending on the same day of the same month as did the term that it succeeds. Each member shall hold office from the date of the member's appointment until the end of the term for which the member was appointed.

Members may be reappointed. Any member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring prior to the expiration date of the term for which the member's predecessor was appointed shall hold office as a member for the remainder of that term. A member shall continue in office subsequent to the expiration date of the member's term until a successor takes office or until a period of sixty days has elapsed, whichever occurs first.

(C) In making appointments to the board, the governor shall select the members from the list of names submitted by the

workers' compensation board of directors nominating committee pursuant to this division. The nominating committee shall submit to the governor a list containing four separate names for each of the members on the board. Within fourteen days after the submission of the list, the governor shall appoint individuals from the list.

At least thirty days prior to a vacancy occurring as a result of the expiration of a term and within thirty days after other vacancies occurring on the board, the nominating committee shall submit an initial list containing four names for each vacancy. Within fourteen days after the submission of the initial list, the governor either shall appoint individuals from that list or request the nominating committee to submit another list of four names for each member the governor has not appointed from the initial list, which list the nominating committee shall submit to the governor within fourteen days after the governor's request. The governor then shall appoint, within seven days after the submission of the second list, one of the individuals from either list to fill the vacancy for which the governor has not made an appointment from the initial list. If the governor appoints an individual to fill a vacancy occurring as a result of the expiration of a term, the individual appointed shall begin serving as a member of the board when the term for which the individual's predecessor was appointed expires or immediately upon appointment by the governor, whichever occurs later. With respect to the filling of vacancies, the nominating committee shall provide the governor with a list of four individuals who are, in the judgment of the nominating committee, the most fully qualified to accede to membership on the board.

In order for the name of an individual to be submitted to

the governor under this division, the nominating committee shall approve the individual by an affirmative vote of a majority of its members.

(D) All members of the board shall receive their reasonable and necessary expenses pursuant to section 126.31 of the Revised Code while engaged in the performance of their duties as members and also shall receive an annual salary not to exceed sixty thousand dollars in total, payable on the following basis:

(1) Except as provided in division (D)(2) of this section, a member shall receive two thousand five hundred dollars during a month in which the member attends one or more meetings of the board and shall receive no payment during a month in which the member attends no meeting of the board.

(2) A member may receive no more than thirty thousand dollars per year to compensate the member for attending meetings of the board, regardless of the number of meetings held by the board during a year or the number of meetings in excess of twelve within a year that the member attends.

(3) Except as provided in division (D)(4) of this section, if a member serves on the workers' compensation audit committee, workers' compensation actuarial committee, or the workers' compensation investment committee, the member shall receive two thousand five hundred dollars during a month in which the member attends one or more meetings of the committee on which the member serves and shall receive no payment during any month in which the member attends no meeting of that committee.

(4) A member may receive no more than thirty thousand dollars per year to compensate the member for attending meetings

of any of the committees specified in division (D)(3) of this section, regardless of the number of meetings held by a committee during a year or the number of committees on which a member serves.

The chairperson of the board shall set the meeting dates of the board as necessary to perform the duties of the board under this chapter and Chapters 4123., 4125., 4127., 4131., 4133., and 4167. of the Revised Code. The board shall meet at least twelve times a year. The administrator of workers' compensation shall provide professional and clerical assistance to the board, as the board considers appropriate.

(E) Before entering upon the duties of office, each appointed member of the board shall take an oath of office as required by sections 3.22 and 3.23 of the Revised Code and file in the office of the secretary of state the bond required under section 4121.127 of the Revised Code.

(F) The board shall:

(1) Establish the overall administrative policy for the bureau for the purposes of this chapter and Chapters 4123., 4125., 4127., 4131., 4133., and 4167. of the Revised Code;

(2) Review progress of the bureau in meeting its cost and quality objectives and in complying with this chapter and Chapters 4123., 4125., 4127., 4131., 4133., and 4167. of the Revised Code;

(3) Submit an annual report to the president of the senate, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the governor and include all of the following in that report:

(a) An evaluation of the cost and quality objectives of the bureau;

(b) A statement of the net assets available for the provision of compensation and benefits under this chapter and Chapters 4123., 4127., and 4131. of the Revised Code as of the last day of the fiscal year;

(c) A statement of any changes that occurred in the net assets available, including employer premiums and net investment income, for the provision of compensation and benefits and payment of administrative expenses, between the first and last day of the fiscal year immediately preceding the date of the report;

(d) The following information for each of the six consecutive fiscal years occurring previous to the report:

(i) A schedule of the net assets available for compensation and benefits;

(ii) The annual cost of the payment of compensation and benefits;

(iii) Annual administrative expenses incurred;

(iv) Annual employer premiums allocated for the provision of compensation and benefits.

(e) A description of any significant changes that occurred during the six years for which the board provided the information required under division (F)(3)(d) of this section that affect the ability of the board to compare that information from year to year.

(4) Review all independent financial audits of the bureau. The administrator shall provide access to records of the bureau to facilitate the review required under this division.

(5) Study issues as requested by the administrator or the

governor;

(6) Contract with all of the following:

(a) An independent actuarial firm to assist the board in making recommendations to the administrator regarding premium rates;

(b) An outside investment counsel to assist the workers' compensation investment committee in fulfilling its duties;

(c) An independent fiduciary counsel to assist the board in the performance of its duties.

(7) Approve the investment policy developed by the workers' compensation investment committee pursuant to section 4121.129 of the Revised Code if the policy satisfies the requirements specified in section 4123.442 of the Revised Code;

(8) Review and publish the investment policy no less than annually and make copies available to interested parties;

(9) Prohibit, on a prospective basis, any specific investment it finds to be contrary to the investment policy approved by the board;

(10) Vote to open each investment class and allow the administrator to invest in an investment class only if the board, by a majority vote, opens that class;

(11) After opening a class but prior to the administrator investing in that class, adopt rules establishing due diligence standards for employees of the bureau to follow when investing in that class and establish policies and procedures to review and monitor the performance and value of each investment class;

(12) Submit a report annually on the performance and value

of each investment class to the governor, the president and minority leader of the senate, and the speaker and minority leader of the house of representatives;

(13) Advise and consent on all of the following:

(a) Administrative rules the administrator submits to it pursuant to division (B)(5) of section 4121.121 of the Revised Code for the classification of occupations or industries, for premium rates and contributions, for the amount to be credited to the surplus fund, for rules and systems of rating, rate revisions, and merit rating;

(b) The duties and authority conferred upon the administrator pursuant to section 4121.37 of the Revised Code;

(c) Rules the administrator adopts for the health partnership program and the qualified health plan system, as provided in sections 4121.44, 4121.441, and 4121.442 of the Revised Code;

(d) Rules the administrator submits to it pursuant to Chapter 4167. of the Revised Code regarding the public employment risk reduction program~~ and the protection of public health care workers from exposure incidents.~~

~~As used in this division, "public health care worker" and "exposure incident" have the same meanings as in section 4167.25 of the Revised Code~~.

(14) Perform all duties required under this chapter and Chapters 4123., 4125., 4127., 4131., 4133., and 4167. of the Revised Code;

(15) ~~Meet with the governor on an annual basis to discuss the administrator's performance of the duties specified in this~~

~~chapter and Chapters 4123., 4125., 4127., 4131., 4133., and 4167. of the Revised Code;~~

~~(16)~~ Develop and participate in a bureau of workers' compensation board of directors education program that consists of all of the following:

(a) An orientation component for newly appointed members;

(b) A continuing education component for board members who have served for at least one year;

(c) A curriculum that includes education about each of the following topics:

(i) Board member duties and responsibilities;

(ii) Compensation and benefits paid pursuant to this chapter and Chapters 4123., 4127., and 4131. of the Revised Code;

(iii) Ethics;

(iv) Governance processes and procedures;

(v) Actuarial soundness;

(vi) Investments;

(vii) Any other subject matter the board believes is reasonably related to the duties of a board member.

~~(17)~~ (16) Hold all sessions, classes, and other events for the program developed pursuant to division ~~(F)(16)~~ (F)(15) of this section in this state.

(G) The board may do both of the following:

(1) Vote to close any investment class;

(2) Create any committees in addition to the workers' compensation audit committee, the workers' compensation actuarial committee, and the workers' compensation investment committee that the board determines are necessary to assist the board in performing its duties.

(H) The office of a member of the board who is convicted of or pleads guilty to a felony, a theft offense as defined in section 2913.01 of the Revised Code, or a violation of section 102.02, 102.03, 102.04, 2921.02, 2921.11, 2921.13, 2921.31, 2921.41, 2921.42, 2921.43, or 2921.44 of the Revised Code shall be deemed vacant. The vacancy shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment. A person who has pleaded guilty to or been convicted of an offense of that nature is ineligible to be a member of the board. A member who receives a bill of indictment for any of the offenses specified in this section shall be automatically suspended from the board pending resolution of the criminal matter.

(I) ~~For the purposes of division (G)(1) of section 121.22 of the Revised Code, the meeting between the governor and the board to review the administrator's performance as required under division (F)(15) of this section shall be considered a meeting regarding the employment of the administrator.~~Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary in section 3.17 of the Revised Code, a board member who fails to attend nine or more board meetings, including regular and special meetings, during any consecutive twelve-month period forfeits the member's position on the board. The resulting vacancy shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

Sec. 4121.121. (A) There is hereby created the bureau of

workers' compensation, which shall be administered by the administrator of workers' compensation. A person appointed to the position of administrator shall possess significant management experience in effectively managing an organization or organizations of substantial size and complexity. A person appointed to the position of administrator also shall possess a minimum of five years of experience in the field of workers' compensation insurance or in another insurance industry, except as otherwise provided when the conditions specified in division (C) of this section are satisfied. The governor shall appoint the administrator as provided in section 121.03 of the Revised Code, and the administrator shall serve at the pleasure of the governor. The governor shall fix the administrator's salary on the basis of the administrator's experience and the administrator's responsibilities and duties under this chapter and Chapters 4123., 4125., 4127., 4131., 4133., and 4167. of the Revised Code. The governor shall not appoint to the position of administrator any person who has, or whose spouse has, given a contribution to the campaign committee of the governor in an amount greater than one thousand dollars during the two-year period immediately preceding the date of the appointment of the administrator.

The administrator shall hold no other public office and shall devote full time to the duties of administrator. Before entering upon the duties of the office, the administrator shall take an oath of office as required by sections 3.22 and 3.23 of the Revised Code, and shall file in the office of the secretary of state, a bond signed by the administrator and by surety approved by the governor, for the sum of fifty thousand dollars payable to the state, conditioned upon the faithful performance of the administrator's duties.

(B) The administrator is responsible for the management of the bureau and for the discharge of all administrative duties imposed upon the administrator in this chapter and Chapters 4123., 4125., 4127., 4131., 4133., and 4167. of the Revised Code, and in the discharge thereof shall do all of the following:

(1) Perform all acts and exercise all authorities and powers, discretionary and otherwise that are required of or vested in the bureau or any of its employees in this chapter and Chapters 4123., 4125., 4127., 4131., 4133., and 4167. of the Revised Code, except the acts and the exercise of authority and power that is required of and vested in the bureau of workers' compensation board of directors or the industrial commission pursuant to those chapters. The treasurer of state shall honor all warrants signed by the administrator, or by one or more of the administrator's employees, authorized by the administrator in writing, or bearing the facsimile signature of the administrator or such employee under sections 4123.42 and 4123.44 of the Revised Code.

(2) Employ, direct, and supervise all employees required in connection with the performance of the duties assigned to the bureau by this chapter and Chapters 4123., 4125., 4127., 4131., 4133., and 4167. of the Revised Code, including an actuary, and may establish job classification plans and compensation for all employees of the bureau provided that this grant of authority shall not be construed as affecting any employee for whom the state employment relations board has established an appropriate bargaining unit under section 4117.06 of the Revised Code. All positions of employment in the bureau are in the classified civil service except those employees the administrator may appoint to serve at the administrator's pleasure in the

unclassified civil service pursuant to section 124.11 of the Revised Code. The administrator shall fix the salaries of employees the administrator appoints to serve at the administrator's pleasure, including the chief operating officer, staff physicians, staff certified nurse-midwives, staff clinical nurse specialists, staff certified nurse practitioners, and other senior management personnel of the bureau and shall establish the compensation of staff attorneys of the bureau's legal section and their immediate supervisors, and take whatever steps are necessary to provide adequate compensation for other staff attorneys.

The administrator may appoint a person who holds a certified position in the classified service within the bureau to a position in the unclassified service within the bureau. A person appointed pursuant to this division to a position in the unclassified service shall retain the right to resume the position and status held by the person in the classified service immediately prior to the person's appointment in the unclassified service, regardless of the number of positions the person held in the unclassified service. An employee's right to resume a position in the classified service may only be exercised when the administrator demotes the employee to a pay range lower than the employee's current pay range or revokes the employee's appointment to the unclassified service. An employee who holds a position in the classified service and who is appointed to a position in the unclassified service on or after January 1, 2016, shall have the right to resume a position in the classified service under this division only within five years after the effective date of the employee's appointment in the unclassified service. An employee forfeits the right to resume a position in the classified service when the employee is

removed from the position in the unclassified service due to incompetence, inefficiency, dishonesty, drunkenness, immoral conduct, insubordination, discourteous treatment of the public, neglect of duty, violation of this chapter or Chapter 124., 4123., 4125., 4127., 4131., 4133., or 4167. of the Revised Code, violation of the rules of the director of administrative services or the administrator, any other failure of good behavior, any other acts of misfeasance, malfeasance, or nonfeasance in office, or conviction of a felony while employed in the civil service. An employee also forfeits the right to resume a position in the classified service upon transfer to a different agency.

Reinstatement to a position in the classified service shall be to a position substantially equal to that position in the classified service held previously, as certified by the department of administrative services. If the position the person previously held in the classified service has been placed in the unclassified service or is otherwise unavailable, the person shall be appointed to a position in the classified service within the bureau that the director of administrative services certifies is comparable in compensation to the position the person previously held in the classified service. Service in the position in the unclassified service shall be counted as service in the position in the classified service held by the person immediately prior to the person's appointment in the unclassified service. When a person is reinstated to a position in the classified service as provided in this division, the person is entitled to all rights, status, and benefits accruing to the position during the person's time of service in the position in the unclassified service.

(3) Reorganize the work of the bureau, its sections,

departments, and offices to the extent necessary to achieve the most efficient performance of its functions and to that end may establish, change, or abolish positions and assign and reassign duties and responsibilities of every employee of the bureau. All persons employed by the commission in positions that, after November 3, 1989, are supervised and directed by the administrator under this section are transferred to the bureau in their respective classifications but subject to reassignment and reclassification of position and compensation as the administrator determines to be in the interest of efficient administration. The civil service status of any person employed by the commission is not affected by this section. Personnel employed by the bureau or the commission who are subject to Chapter 4117. of the Revised Code shall retain all of their rights and benefits conferred pursuant to that chapter as it presently exists or is hereafter amended and nothing in this chapter or Chapter 4123. of the Revised Code shall be construed as eliminating or interfering with Chapter 4117. of the Revised Code or the rights and benefits conferred under that chapter to public employees or to any bargaining unit.

(4) Provide offices, equipment, supplies, and other facilities for the bureau.

(5) Prepare and submit to the board information the administrator considers pertinent or the board requires, together with the administrator's recommendations, in the form of administrative rules, for the advice and consent of the board, for classifications of occupations or industries, for premium rates and contributions, for the amount to be credited to the surplus fund, for rules and systems of rating, rate revisions, and merit rating. The administrator shall obtain, prepare, and submit any other information the board requires for

the prompt and efficient discharge of its duties.

(6) Keep the accounts required by division (A) of section 4123.34 of the Revised Code and all other accounts and records necessary to the collection, administration, and distribution of the workers' compensation funds and shall obtain the statistical and other information required by section 4123.19 of the Revised Code.

(7) Exercise the investment powers vested in the administrator by section 4123.44 of the Revised Code in accordance with the investment policy approved by the board pursuant to section 4121.12 of the Revised Code and in consultation with the chief investment officer of the bureau of workers' compensation. The administrator shall not engage in any prohibited investment activity specified by the board pursuant to division (F)(9) of section 4121.12 of the Revised Code and shall not invest in any type of investment specified in divisions (B)(1) to (10) of section 4123.442 of the Revised Code. All business shall be transacted, all funds invested, all warrants for money drawn and payments made, and all cash and securities and other property held, in the name of the bureau, or in the name of its nominee, provided that nominees are authorized by the administrator solely for the purpose of facilitating the transfer of securities, and restricted to the administrator and designated employees.

(8) In accordance with Chapter 125. of the Revised Code, purchase supplies, materials, equipment, and services.

(9) Prepare ~~and submit to the board~~ an annual budget for internal operating purposes~~ for the board's approval~~. The administrator also shall, separately from the budget the industrial commission submits, prepare and submit to the

director of budget and management a budget for each biennium. The ~~budgets~~ budget submitted to the ~~board and the~~ director shall include estimates of the costs and necessary expenditures of the bureau in the discharge of any duty imposed by law.

(10) As promptly as possible in the course of efficient administration, decentralize and relocate such of the personnel and activities of the bureau as is appropriate to the end that the receipt, investigation, determination, and payment of claims may be undertaken at or near the place of injury or the residence of the claimant and for that purpose establish regional offices, in such places as the administrator considers proper, capable of discharging as many of the functions of the bureau as is practicable so as to promote prompt and efficient administration in the processing of claims. All active and inactive lost-time claims files shall be held at the service office responsible for the claim. A claimant, at the claimant's request, shall be provided with information by telephone as to the location of the file pertaining to the claimant's claim. The administrator shall ensure that all service office employees report directly to the director for their service office.

(11) Provide a written binder on new coverage where the administrator considers it to be in the best interest of the risk. The administrator, or any other person authorized by the administrator, shall grant the binder upon submission of a request for coverage by the employer. A binder is effective for a period of thirty days from date of issuance and is nonrenewable. Payroll reports and premium charges shall coincide with the effective date of the binder.

(12) Set standards for the reasonable and maximum handling time of claims payment functions, ensure, by rules, the

impartial and prompt treatment of all claims and employer risk accounts, and establish a secure, accurate method of time stamping all incoming mail and documents hand delivered to bureau employees.

(13) Ensure that all employees of the bureau follow the orders and rules of the commission as such orders and rules relate to the commission's overall adjudicatory policy-making and management duties under this chapter and Chapters 4123., 4127., and 4131. of the Revised Code.

(14) Manage and operate a data processing system with a common data base for the use of both the bureau and the commission and, in consultation with the commission, using electronic data processing equipment, shall develop a claims tracking system that is sufficient to monitor the status of a claim at any time and that lists appeals that have been filed and orders or determinations that have been issued pursuant to section 4123.511 or 4123.512 of the Revised Code, including the dates of such filings and issuances.

(15) Establish and maintain a medical section within the bureau. The medical section shall do all of the following:

(a) Assist the administrator in establishing standard medical fees, approving medical procedures, and determining eligibility and reasonableness of the compensation payments for medical, hospital, and nursing services, and in establishing guidelines for payment policies which recognize usual, customary, and reasonable methods of payment for covered services;

(b) Provide a resource to respond to questions from claims examiners for employees of the bureau;

(c) Audit fee bill payments;

(d) Implement a program to utilize, to the maximum extent possible, electronic data processing equipment for storage of information to facilitate authorizations of compensation payments for medical, hospital, drug, and nursing services;

(e) Perform other duties assigned to it by the administrator.

(16) Appoint, as the administrator determines necessary, panels to review and advise the administrator on disputes arising over a determination that a health care service or supply provided to a claimant is not covered under this chapter or Chapter 4123., 4127., or 4131. of the Revised Code or is medically unnecessary. If an individual health care provider is involved in the dispute, the panel shall consist of individuals licensed pursuant to the same section of the Revised Code as such health care provider.

(17) Pursuant to section 4123.65 of the Revised Code, approve applications for the final settlement of claims for compensation or benefits under this chapter and Chapters 4123., 4127., and 4131. of the Revised Code as the administrator determines appropriate, except in regard to the applications of self-insuring employers and their employees.

(18) Comply with section 3517.13 of the Revised Code, and except in regard to contracts entered into pursuant to the authority contained in section 4121.44 of the Revised Code, comply with the competitive bidding procedures set forth in the Revised Code for all contracts into which the administrator enters provided that those contracts fall within the type of contracts and dollar amounts specified in the Revised Code for

competitive bidding and further provided that those contracts are not otherwise specifically exempt from the competitive bidding procedures contained in the Revised Code.

(19) Adopt, with the advice and consent of the board, rules for the operation of the bureau.

(20) Prepare and submit to the board information the administrator considers pertinent or the board requires, together with the administrator's recommendations, in the form of administrative rules, for the advice and consent of the board, for the health partnership program and the qualified health plan system, as provided in sections 4121.44, 4121.441, and 4121.442 of the Revised Code.

(C) The administrator, with the advice and consent of the senate, shall appoint a chief operating officer who has a minimum of five years of experience in the field of workers' compensation insurance or in another similar insurance industry if the administrator does not possess such experience. The chief operating officer shall not commence the chief operating officer's duties until after the senate consents to the chief operating officer's appointment. The chief operating officer shall serve in the unclassified civil service of the state.

Sec. 4121.13. The administrator of workers' compensation shall:

(A) Investigate, ascertain, and declare and prescribe what hours of labor, safety devices, safeguards, or other means or methods of protection are best adapted to render the employees of every employment and place of employment and frequenters of every place of employment safe, and to protect their welfare as required by law or lawful orders~~, and establish and maintain~~

~~museums of safety and hygiene in which shall be exhibited safety devices, safeguards, and other means and methods for the protection of life, health, safety, and welfare of employees~~;

(B) Ascertain and fix reasonable standards and prescribe, modify, and enforce reasonable orders for the adoption of safety devices, safeguards, and other means or methods of protection to be as nearly uniform as possible as may be necessary to carry out all laws and lawful orders relative to the protection of the life, health, safety, and welfare of employees in employments and places of employment or frequenters of places of employment;

(C) Ascertain, fix, and order reasonable standards for the construction, repair, and maintenance of places of employment as shall render them safe;

(D) Investigate, ascertain, and determine reasonable classifications of persons, employments, and places of employment as are necessary to carry out the applicable sections of sections 4101.01 to 4101.16 and 4121.01 to 4121.29 of the Revised Code;

(E) Adopt reasonable and proper rules relative to the exercise of ~~his~~ the administrator's powers and authorities, and proper rules to govern ~~his~~ the administrator's proceedings and to regulate the mode and manner of all investigations and hearings, which rules shall not be effective until ten days after their publication; a copy of the rules shall be delivered at cost to every citizen making application therefor;

(F) Investigate all cases of fraud or other illegalities pertaining to the operation of the workers' compensation system and its several insurance funds and for that purpose, the administrator has every power of an inquisitorial nature granted

to the industrial commission in this chapter and Chapter 4123. of the Revised Code;

(G) Do all things convenient and necessary to accomplish the purposes directed in sections 4101.01 to 4101.16 and 4121.01 to 4121.28 of the Revised Code;

(H) Nothing in this section shall be construed to supersede section 4105.011 of the Revised Code in particular, or Chapter 4105. of the Revised Code in general.

Sec. 4121.41. (A) The administrator of workers' compensation shall operate a program designed to inform employees and employers of their rights and responsibilities under Chapter 4123. of the Revised Code and as part of that program prepare and distribute pamphlets, which clearly and simply explain at least all of the following:

(1) The rights and responsibilities of claimants and employers;

(2) The procedures for processing claims;

(3) The procedure for fulfilling employer responsibility;

(4) All applicable statutes of limitation;

(5) The availability of services and benefits;

(6) The claimant's right to representation in the processing of a claim or to elect no representation.

The administrator shall ensure that the provisions of this section are faithfully and speedily implemented.

(B) The bureau of workers' compensation shall maintain an ongoing program to identify employers subject to Chapter 4123. of the Revised Code and to audit employers to ensure an optimum

level of premium payment. The bureau shall coordinate such efforts with other governmental agencies which have information as to employers who are subject to Chapter 4123. of the Revised Code.

(C) The administrator shall handle complaints through the service offices, the claims section, and the ~~ombudsperson program~~workers' compensation customer advocacy office. The administrator shall provide toll free telephone lines for employers and claimants in order to expedite the handling of complaints. The bureau shall monitor complaint traffic to ensure an adequacy of telephone service to bureau offices and shall compile statistics on complaint subjects. Based upon those compilations, the bureau shall revise procedures and rules to correct major problem areas and submit data and recommendations annually to the appropriate committees of the general assembly.

Sec. 4121.45. (A) There is hereby created ~~a~~ the workers' compensation ~~ombudsperson system~~ customer advocacy office to assist claimants and employers in matters dealing with the bureau of workers' compensation and the industrial commission. The industrial commission nominating council shall appoint a chief ~~ombudsperson~~customer advocate. The chief ~~ombudsperson~~customer advocate, with the advice and consent of the nominating council, may appoint such assistant ~~ombudspersons~~ advocates as the nominating council deems necessary. The position of chief ~~ombudsperson~~ customer advocate is for a term of six years. A person appointed to the position of chief ~~ombudsperson~~ customer advocate shall serve at the pleasure of the nominating council. The chief ~~ombudsperson~~ customer advocate may not be transferred, demoted, or suspended during the person's tenure and may be removed by the nominating council only upon a vote of not fewer than nine members of the

nominating council. The chief ~~ombudsperson~~ customer advocate shall devote the chief ~~ombudsperson's~~ customer advocate's full time and attention to the duties of the ~~ombudsperson's~~ chief customer advocate's office. The administrator of workers' compensation shall furnish the chief ~~ombudsperson~~ customer advocate with the office space, supplies, and clerical assistance that will enable the chief ~~ombudsperson~~ customer advocate and the ~~ombudsperson system~~ customer advocacy office staff to perform their duties effectively. The ~~ombudsperson program~~ office shall be funded out of the budget of the bureau and the chief ~~ombudsperson~~ customer advocate and the ~~ombudsperson system~~ customer advocacy office staff shall be carried on the bureau payroll. The chief ~~ombudsperson~~ customer advocate and the ~~ombudsperson system~~ customer advocacy office shall be under the direction of the nominating council. The administrator and all employees of the bureau and the commission shall give the ~~ombudsperson system~~ customer advocacy office staff full and prompt cooperation in all matters relating to the duties of the chief ~~ombudsperson~~customer advocate.

(B) The ~~ombudsperson system~~ customer advocacy office staff shall:

(1) Answer inquiries or investigate complaints made by employers or claimants under this chapter and Chapter 4123. of the Revised Code as they relate to the processing of a claim for workers' compensation benefits;

(2) Provide claimants and employers with information regarding problems which arise out of the functions of the bureau, commission hearing officers, and the commission and the procedures employed in the processing of claims;

(3) Answer inquiries or investigate complaints of an

employer as they relate to reserves established and premiums charged in connection with the employer's account;

(4) Comply with Chapter 102. and sections 2921.42 and 2921.43 of the Revised Code and the nominating council's human resource and ethics policies;

(5) Not express any opinions as to the merit of a claim or the correctness of a decision by the various officers or agencies as the decision relates to a claim for benefits or compensation.

For the purpose of carrying out the chief ~~ombudsperson's~~ customer advocate's duties, the chief ~~ombudsperson~~ customer advocate or the ~~ombudsperson system~~ customer advocacy office staff, notwithstanding sections 4123.27 and 4123.88 of the Revised Code, has the right at all reasonable times to examine the contents of a claim file and discuss with parties in interest the contents of the file as long as the ~~ombudsperson~~ customer advocate does not divulge information that would tend to prejudice the case of either party to a claim or that would tend to compromise a privileged attorney-client relationship, physician-patient relationship, or advanced practice registered nurse-patient relationship.

(C) The chief ~~ombudsperson~~ customer advocate shall:

(1) Assist any service office in its duties whenever it requires assistance or information that can best be obtained from central office personnel or records;

(2) Annually assemble reports from each assistant ~~ombudsperson~~ customer advocate as to their activities for the preceding year together with their recommendations as to changes or improvements in the operations of the workers' compensation

system. The chief ~~ombudsperson~~ customer advocate shall prepare a written report summarizing the activities of the ~~ombudsperson system~~ customer advocacy office together with a digest of recommendations. The chief ~~ombudsperson~~ customer advocate shall transmit the report to the nominating council.

(3) Comply with Chapter 102. and sections 2921.42 and 2921.43 of the Revised Code and the nominating council's human resource and ethics policies.

(D) No ~~ombudsperson~~ customer advocate or assistant ~~ombudsperson~~ customer advocate shall:

(1) Represent a claimant or employer in claims pending before or to be filed with the administrator, a district or staff hearing officer, the commission, or the courts of the state, nor shall ~~an ombudsperson~~ a customer advocate or assistant ~~ombudsperson~~ customer advocate undertake any such representation for a period of one year after the ~~ombudsperson's~~ customer advocate's or assistant ~~ombudsperson's~~ customer advocate's employment terminates or be eligible for employment by the bureau or the commission or as a district or staff hearing officer for one year;

(2) Express any opinions as to the merit of a claim or the correctness of a decision by the various officers or agencies as the decision relates to a claim for benefits or compensation.

(E) The chief ~~ombudsperson~~ customer advocate and assistant ~~ombudspersons~~ customer advocates shall receive compensation at a level established by the nominating council commensurate with the individual's background, education, and experience in workers' compensation or related fields. The chief ~~ombudsperson~~ customer advocate and assistant ~~ombudspersons~~ customer advocates

are full-time permanent employees in the unclassified service of the state and are entitled to all benefits that accrue to such employees, including, without limitation, sick, vacation, and personal leaves. Assistant ~~ombudspersons~~ customer advocates serve at the pleasure of the chief ~~ombudsperson~~customer advocate.

(F) In the event of a vacancy in the position of chief ~~ombudsperson~~customer advocate, the nominating council may appoint a person to serve as acting chief ~~ombudsperson~~ customer advocate until a chief ~~ombudsperson~~ customer advocate is appointed. The acting chief ~~ombudsperson~~ customer advocate shall be under the direction and control of the nominating council and may be removed by the nominating council with or without just cause.

Sec. 4123.44. The members of the bureau of workers' compensation board of directors, the administrator of workers' compensation, and the bureau of workers' compensation chief investment officer are ~~the trustees of~~ fiduciaries to the state insurance fund. The administrator, in accordance with sections 4121.126 and 4121.127 of the Revised Code and the investment policy approved by the board pursuant to section 4121.12 of the Revised Code, and in consultation with the bureau of workers' compensation chief investment officer, may invest any of the surplus or reserve belonging to the state insurance fund. The administrator and the bureau of workers' compensation chief investment officer shall not deviate from the investment policy approved by the board without the approval of the workers' compensation investment committee and the board.

The administrator shall not invest in any type of investment specified in divisions (B)(1) to (10) of section

4123.442 of the Revised Code. The administrator shall not make an investment decision with the primary purpose of influencing any social or environmental policy or attempting to influence the governance of any corporation.

The administrator and other fiduciaries shall discharge their duties with respect to the funds with the care, skill, prudence, and diligence under the circumstances then prevailing that a prudent person acting in a like capacity and familiar with such matters would use in the conduct of an enterprise of a like character and with like aims, and by diversifying the investments of the assets of the funds so as to minimize the risk of large losses, unless under the circumstances it is clearly prudent not to do so.

The administrator and other fiduciaries, in accordance with their fiduciary duties described under this section, shall make investment decisions with the sole purpose of maximizing the return on investments and that are consistent with any other fiduciary responsibilities of the administrator and other fiduciaries under this chapter and Chapters 4121., 4127., and 4131. of the Revised Code.

To facilitate investment of the funds, the administrator may establish a partnership, trust, limited liability company, corporation, including a corporation exempt from taxation under the Internal Revenue Code, 100 Stat. 2085, 26 U.S.C. 1, as amended, or any other legal entity authorized to transact business in this state.

When reporting on the performance of investments, the administrator shall comply with the performance presentation standards established by the association for investment management and research.

All investments shall be purchased at current market prices and the evidences of title to the investments shall be placed in the custody of the treasurer of state, who is hereby designated as custodian, or in the custody of the treasurer of state's authorized agent. Evidences of title of the investments so purchased may be deposited by the treasurer of state for safekeeping with an authorized agent selected by the treasurer of state who is a qualified trustee under section 135.18 of the Revised Code. The treasurer of state or the agent shall collect the principal, dividends, distributions, and interest as they become due and payable and place them when collected into the state insurance fund.

The treasurer of state shall pay for investments purchased by the administrator on receipt of written or electronic instructions from the administrator or the administrator's designated agent authorizing the purchase, and pending receipt of the evidence of title of the investment by the treasurer of state or the treasurer of state's authorized agent. The administrator may sell investments held by the administrator, and the treasurer of state or the treasurer of state's authorized agent shall accept payment from the purchaser and deliver evidence of title of the investment to the purchaser, on receipt of written or electronic instructions from the administrator or the administrator's designated agent authorizing the sale, and pending receipt of the moneys for the investments. The amount received shall be placed in the state insurance fund. The administrator and the treasurer of state may enter into agreements to establish procedures for the purchase and sale of investments under this division and the custody of the investments.

No purchase or sale of any investment shall be made under

this section, except as authorized by the administrator.

Any statement of financial position distributed by the administrator shall include the fair value, as of the statement date, of all investments held by the administrator under this section.

When in the judgment of the administrator it is necessary to provide available funds for the payment of compensation or benefits under this chapter, the administrator may borrow money from any available source and pledge as security a sufficient amount of bonds or other securities in which the state insurance fund is invested. The aggregate unpaid amount of loans existing at any one time for money so borrowed shall not exceed ten million dollars. The bonds or other securities so pledged as security for such loans to the administrator shall be the sole security for the payment of the principal and interest of any such loan. The administrator shall not be personally liable for the payment of the principal or the interest of any such loan. No such loan shall be made for a longer period of time than one year. Such loans may be renewed but no one renewal shall be for a period in excess of one year. Such loans shall bear such rate of interest as the administrator determines and in negotiating the loans, the administrator shall endeavor to secure as favorable interest rates and terms as circumstances will permit.

The treasurer of state may deliver to the person or governmental agency making such loan, the bonds or other securities which are to be pledged by the administrator as security for such loan, upon receipt by the treasurer of state of an order of the administrator authorizing such loan. Upon payment of any such loan by the administrator, the bonds or other securities pledged as security therefor shall be returned

to the treasurer of state as custodian of such bonds.

The administrator may pledge with the treasurer of state such amount of bonds or other securities in which the state insurance fund is invested as is reasonably necessary as security for any certificates issued, or paid out, by the treasurer of state upon any warrants drawn by the administrator.

The administrator may secure investment information services, consulting services, and other like services to facilitate investment of the surplus and reserve belonging to the state insurance fund. The administrator shall pay the expense of securing such services from the state insurance fund.

The board and administrator shall not take any action to promote a policy under which the administrator makes investment decisions with the primary purpose of influencing any social or environmental policy or attempting to influence the governance of any corporation.

Sec. 4123.52. (A) The jurisdiction of the industrial commission and the authority of the administrator of workers' compensation over each case is continuing, and the commission may make such modification or change with respect to former findings or orders with respect thereto, as, in its opinion is justified. No modification or change nor any finding or award in respect of any claim shall be made with respect to disability, compensation, dependency, or benefits, after five years from the date of injury in the absence of medical benefits being provided under this chapter or in the absence of payment of compensation under section 4123.57, 4123.58, or division (A) or (B) of section 4123.56 of the Revised Code or wages in lieu of compensation in a manner so as to satisfy the requirements of section 4123.84 of the Revised Code, in which event the

modification, change, finding, or award shall be made within five years from the date of the last medical services being rendered or the date of the last payment of compensation or from the date of death, nor unless written notice of claim for the specific part or parts of the body injured or disabled has been given as provided in section 4123.84 or 4123.85 of the Revised Code. The commission shall not make any modification, change, finding, or award which shall award compensation for a back period in excess of two years prior to the date of filing application therefor.

~~(B)~~ (B)(1) As used in this division, "prosthetic device" means a custom fabricated or fitted device used to replace a missing appendage or other external body part. "Prosthetic device" includes an artificial limb, hand, foot, or eye or an intraocular lens. "Prosthetic device" does not include a dental appliance, eyeglasses, hearing aid, ostomy product, or any other item that does not have a significant impact on the musculoskeletal functions of the body such as breast prostheses, eyelashes, wigs, and other cosmetic devices.

(2) Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary in division (A) of this section, the commission or administrator may, regardless of the date of injury or the last payment of compensation or benefits, order payment to purchase, repair, or replace a prosthetic device if the purchase, repair, or replacement is necessary due to an amputation or loss that resulted from an allowed injury or occupational disease.

(3) Ordering a payment under division (B)(2) of this section does not extend the time period during which the commission or administrator may modify or change a former finding or order in a claim as provided under division (A) of

this section.

(C) Notwithstanding division (A) of this section, and except as otherwise provided in a rule that shall be adopted by the administrator, with the advice and consent of the bureau of workers' compensation board of directors, neither the administrator nor the commission shall make any finding or award for payment of medical or vocational rehabilitation services submitted for payment more than one year after the date the services were rendered or more than one year after the date the services became payable under division (I) of section 4123.511 of the Revised Code, whichever is later. No medical or vocational rehabilitation provider shall bill a claimant for services rendered if the administrator or commission is prohibited from making that payment under this division.

~~(C)~~ (D) Division ~~(B)~~ (C) of this section does not apply to requests made by the centers for medicare and medicaid services in the United States department of health and human services for reimbursement of conditional payments made pursuant to section 1395y(b)(2) of title 42, United States Code (commonly known as the "Medicare Secondary Payer Act").

~~(D)~~ (E) This section does not affect the right of a claimant to compensation accruing subsequent to the filing of any such application, provided the application is filed within the time limit provided in this section.

~~(E)~~ (F) This section does not deprive the commission of its continuing jurisdiction to determine the questions raised by any application for modification of award which has been filed with the commission after June 1, 1932, and prior to the expiration of the applicable period but in respect to which no award has been granted or denied during the applicable period.

~~(F)~~ (G) The commission may, by general rules, provide for the destruction of files of cases in which no further action may be taken.

~~(G)~~ (H) The commission and administrator of workers' compensation each may, by general rules, provide for the retention and destruction of all other records in their possession or under their control pursuant to section 121.211 and sections 149.34 to 149.36 of the Revised Code. The bureau of workers' compensation may purchase or rent required equipment for the document retention media, as determined necessary to preserve the records. Photographs, microphotographs, microfilm, films, or other direct or electronic document retention media, when properly identified, have the same effect as the original record and may be offered in like manner and may be received as evidence in proceedings before the industrial commission, staff hearing officers, and district hearing officers, and in any court where the original record could have been introduced.

Sec. 4123.54. (A) Except as otherwise provided in this division or divisions (I) and (K) of this section, every employee, who is injured or who contracts an occupational disease, and the dependents of each employee who is killed, or dies as the result of an occupational disease contracted in the course of employment, wherever the injury has occurred or occupational disease has been contracted, is entitled to receive the compensation for loss sustained on account of the injury, occupational disease, or death, and the medical, nurse, and hospital services and medicines, and the amount of funeral expenses in case of death, as are provided by this chapter. The compensation and benefits shall be provided, as applicable, directly from the employee's self-insuring employer as provided in section 4123.35 of the Revised Code or from the state

insurance fund. An employee or dependent is not entitled to receive compensation or benefits under this division if the employee's injury or occupational disease is either of the following:

(1) Purposely self-inflicted;

(2) Caused by the employee being intoxicated, under the influence of a controlled substance not prescribed by a physician, certified nurse-midwife, clinical nurse specialist, or certified nurse practitioner, or under the influence of marihuana if being intoxicated, under the influence of a controlled substance not prescribed by a physician, certified nurse-midwife, clinical nurse specialist, or certified nurse practitioner, or under the influence of marihuana was the proximate cause of the injury.

(B) For the purpose of this section, provided that an employer has posted written notice to employees that the results of, or the employee's refusal to submit to, any chemical test described under this division may affect the employee's eligibility for compensation and benefits pursuant to this chapter and Chapter 4121. of the Revised Code, there is a rebuttable presumption that an employee is intoxicated, under the influence of a controlled substance not prescribed by the employee's physician, certified nurse-midwife, clinical nurse specialist, or certified nurse practitioner, or under the influence of marihuana and that being intoxicated, under the influence of a controlled substance not prescribed by the employee's physician, certified nurse-midwife, clinical nurse specialist, or certified nurse practitioner, or under the influence of marihuana is the proximate cause of an injury under either of the following conditions:

(1) When any one or more of the following is true:

(a) The employee, through a qualifying chemical test administered within eight hours of an injury, is determined to have an alcohol concentration level equal to or in excess of the levels established in divisions (A)(1)(b) to (i) of section 4511.19 of the Revised Code.

(b) The employee, through a qualifying chemical test administered within thirty-two hours of an injury, is determined to have a controlled substance not prescribed by the employee's physician, certified nurse-midwife, clinical nurse specialist, or certified nurse practitioner or marihuana in the employee's system at a level equal to or in excess of the cutoff concentration level for the particular substance as provided in section ~~40.87~~ 40.85 of Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations, 49 C.F.R. ~~40.87~~40.85, as ~~amended~~it existed on January 1, 2024, or as subsequently amended as a result of a statute or rule.

(c) The employee, through a qualifying chemical test administered within thirty-two hours of an injury, is determined to have barbiturates, benzodiazepines, or methadone in the employee's system that tests above levels established by laboratories certified by the United States department of health and human services.

(2) When the employee refuses to submit to a requested chemical test, on the condition that that employee is or was given notice that the refusal to submit to any chemical test described in division (B)(1) of this section may affect the employee's eligibility for compensation and benefits under this chapter and Chapter 4121. of the Revised Code.

(C)(1) For purposes of division (B) of this section, a chemical test is a qualifying chemical test if it is administered to an employee after an injury under at least one of the following conditions:

(a) When the employee's employer had reasonable cause to suspect that the employee may be intoxicated, under the influence of a controlled substance not prescribed by the employee's physician, certified nurse-midwife, clinical nurse specialist, or certified nurse practitioner, or under the influence of marihuana;

(b) At the request of a police officer pursuant to section 4511.191 of the Revised Code, and not at the request of the employee's employer;

(c) At the request of a licensed physician, certified nurse-midwife, clinical nurse specialist, or certified nurse practitioner who is not employed by the employee's employer, and not at the request of the employee's employer.

(2) As used in division (C)(1)(a) of this section, "reasonable cause" means, but is not limited to, evidence that an employee is or was using alcohol, a controlled substance, or marihuana drawn from specific, objective facts and reasonable inferences drawn from these facts in light of experience and training. These facts and inferences may be based on, but are not limited to, any of the following:

(a) Observable phenomena, such as direct observation of use, possession, or distribution of alcohol, a controlled substance, or marihuana, or of the physical symptoms of being under the influence of alcohol, a controlled substance, or marihuana, such as but not limited to slurred speech; dilated

pupils; odor of alcohol, a controlled substance, or marihuana; changes in affect; or dynamic mood swings;

(b) A pattern of abnormal conduct, erratic or aberrant behavior, or deteriorating work performance such as frequent absenteeism, excessive tardiness, or recurrent accidents, that appears to be related to the use of alcohol, a controlled substance, or marihuana, and does not appear to be attributable to other factors;

(c) The identification of an employee as the focus of a criminal investigation into unauthorized possession, use, or trafficking of a controlled substance or marihuana;

(d) A report of use of alcohol, a controlled substance, or marihuana provided by a reliable and credible source;

(e) Repeated or flagrant violations of the safety or work rules of the employee's employer, that are determined by the employee's supervisor to pose a substantial risk of physical injury or property damage and that appear to be related to the use of alcohol, a controlled substance, or marihuana and that do not appear attributable to other factors.

(D) Nothing in this section shall be construed to affect the rights of an employer to test employees for alcohol or controlled substance abuse.

(E) For the purpose of this section, laboratories certified by the United States department of health and human services or laboratories that meet or exceed the standards of that department for laboratory certification shall be used for processing the test results of a qualifying chemical test.

(F) The written notice required by division (B) of this section shall be the same size or larger than the proof of

workers' compensation coverage furnished by the bureau of workers' compensation and shall be posted by the employer in the same location as the proof of workers' compensation coverage or the certificate of self-insurance.

(G) If a condition that pre-existed an injury is substantially aggravated by the injury, and that substantial aggravation is documented by objective diagnostic findings, objective clinical findings, or objective test results, no compensation or benefits are payable because of the pre-existing condition once that condition has returned to a level that would have existed without the injury.

(H)(1) Whenever, with respect to an employee of an employer who is subject to and has complied with this chapter, there is possibility of conflict with respect to the application of workers' compensation laws because the contract of employment is entered into and all or some portion of the work is or is to be performed in a state or states other than Ohio, the employer and the employee may agree to be bound by the laws of this state or by the laws of some other state in which all or some portion of the work of the employee is to be performed. The agreement shall be in writing and shall be filed with the bureau of workers' compensation within ten days after it is executed and shall remain in force until terminated or modified by agreement of the parties similarly filed. If the agreement is to be bound by the laws of this state and the employer has complied with this chapter, then the employee is entitled to compensation and benefits regardless of where the injury occurs or the disease is contracted and the rights of the employee and the employee's dependents under the laws of this state are the exclusive remedy against the employer on account of injury, disease, or death in the course of and arising out of the employee's employment. If

the agreement is to be bound by the laws of another state and the employer has complied with the laws of that state, the rights of the employee and the employee's dependents under the laws of that state are the exclusive remedy against the employer on account of injury, disease, or death in the course of and arising out of the employee's employment without regard to the place where the injury was sustained or the disease contracted. If an employer and an employee enter into an agreement under this division, the fact that the employer and the employee entered into that agreement shall not be construed to change the status of an employee whose continued employment is subject to the will of the employer or the employee, unless the agreement contains a provision that expressly changes that status.

(2) If an employee or the employee's dependents receive an award of compensation or benefits under this chapter or Chapter 4121., 4127., or 4131. of the Revised Code for the same injury, occupational disease, or death for which the employee or the employee's dependents previously pursued or otherwise elected to accept workers' compensation benefits and received a decision on the merits as defined in section 4123.542 of the Revised Code under the laws of another state or recovered damages under the laws of another state, the claim shall be disallowed and the administrator or any self-insuring employer, by any lawful means, may collect from the employee or the employee's dependents any of the following:

(a) The amount of compensation or benefits paid to or on behalf of the employee or the employee's dependents by the administrator or a self-insuring employer pursuant to this chapter or Chapter 4121., 4127., or 4131. of the Revised Code for that award;

(b) Any interest, attorney's fees, and costs the administrator or the self-insuring employer incurs in collecting that payment.

(3) If an employee or the employee's dependents receive an award of compensation or benefits under this chapter or Chapter 4121., 4127., or 4131. of the Revised Code and subsequently pursue or otherwise elect to accept workers' compensation benefits or damages under the laws of another state for the same injury, occupational disease, or death the claim under this chapter or Chapter 4121., 4127., or 4131. of the Revised Code shall be disallowed. The administrator or a self-insuring employer, by any lawful means, may collect from the employee or the employee's dependents or other-states' insurer any of the following:

(a) The amount of compensation or benefits paid to or on behalf of the employee or the employee's dependents by the administrator or the self-insuring employer pursuant to this chapter or Chapter 4121., 4127., or 4131. of the Revised Code for that award;

(b) Any interest, costs, and attorney's fees the administrator or the self-insuring employer incurs in collecting that payment;

(c) Any costs incurred by an employer in contesting or responding to any claim filed by the employee or the employee's dependents for the same injury, occupational disease, or death that was filed after the original claim for which the employee or the employee's dependents received a decision on the merits as described in section 4123.542 of the Revised Code.

(4) If the employee's employer pays premiums into the

state insurance fund, the administrator shall not charge the amount of compensation or benefits the administrator collects pursuant to division (H)(2) or (3) of this section to the employer's experience. If the administrator collects any costs incurred by an employer in contesting or responding to any claim pursuant to division (H)(2) or (3) of this section, the administrator shall forward the amount collected to that employer. If the employee's employer is a self-insuring employer, the self-insuring employer shall deduct the amount of compensation or benefits the self-insuring employer collects pursuant to this division from the paid compensation the self-insuring employer reports to the administrator under division (L) of section 4123.35 of the Revised Code.

(5) If an employee is a resident of a state other than this state and is insured under the workers' compensation law or similar laws of a state other than this state, the employee and the employee's dependents are not entitled to receive compensation or benefits under this chapter, on account of injury, disease, or death arising out of or in the course of employment while temporarily within this state, and the rights of the employee and the employee's dependents under the laws of the other state are the exclusive remedy against the employer on account of the injury, disease, or death.

(6) An employee, or the dependent of an employee, who elects to receive compensation and benefits under this chapter or Chapter 4121., 4127., or 4131. of the Revised Code for a claim may not receive compensation and benefits under the workers' compensation laws of any state other than this state for that same claim. For each claim submitted by or on behalf of an employee, the administrator or, if the employee is employed by a self-insuring employer, the self-insuring employer, shall

request the employee or the employee's dependent to sign an election that affirms the employee's or employee's dependent's acceptance of electing to receive compensation and benefits under this chapter or Chapter 4121., 4127., or 4131. of the Revised Code for that claim that also affirmatively waives and releases the employee's or the employee's dependent's right to file for and receive compensation and benefits under the laws of any state other than this state for that claim. The employee or employee's dependent shall sign the election form within twenty-eight days after the administrator or self-insuring employer submits the request or the administrator or self-insuring employer shall dismiss that claim.

In the event a workers' compensation claim has been filed in another jurisdiction on behalf of an employee or the dependents of an employee, and the employee or dependents subsequently elect to receive compensation, benefits, or both under this chapter or Chapter 4121., 4127., or 4131. of the Revised Code, the employee or dependent shall withdraw or refuse acceptance of the workers' compensation claim filed in the other jurisdiction in order to pursue compensation or benefits under the laws of this state. If the employee or dependents were awarded workers' compensation benefits or had recovered damages under the laws of the other state, any compensation and benefits awarded under this chapter or Chapter 4121., 4127., or 4131. of the Revised Code shall be paid only to the extent to which those payments exceed the amounts paid under the laws of the other state. If the employee or dependent fails to withdraw or to refuse acceptance of the workers' compensation claim in the other jurisdiction within twenty-eight days after a request made by the administrator or a self-insuring employer, the administrator or self-insuring employer shall dismiss the

employee's or employee's dependents' claim made in this state.

(I) If an employee who is covered under the federal "Longshore and Harbor Workers' Compensation Act," 98 Stat. 1639, 33 U.S.C. 901 et seq., is injured or contracts an occupational disease or dies as a result of an injury or occupational disease, and if that employee's or that employee's dependents' claim for compensation or benefits for that injury, occupational disease, or death is subject to the jurisdiction of that act, the employee or the employee's dependents are not entitled to apply for and shall not receive compensation or benefits under this chapter and Chapter 4121. of the Revised Code. The rights of such an employee and the employee's dependents under the federal "Longshore and Harbor Workers' Compensation Act," 98 Stat. 1639, 33 U.S.C. 901 et seq., are the exclusive remedy against the employer for that injury, occupational disease, or death.

(J) Compensation or benefits are not payable to a claimant or a dependent during the period of confinement of the claimant or dependent in any state or federal correctional institution, or in any county jail in lieu of incarceration in a state or federal correctional institution, whether in this or any other state for conviction of violation of any state or federal criminal law.

(K) An employer, upon the approval of the administrator, may provide for workers' compensation coverage for the employer's employees who are professional athletes and coaches by submitting to the administrator proof of coverage under a league policy issued under the laws of another state under either of the following circumstances:

(1) The employer administers the payroll and workers'

compensation insurance for a professional sports team subject to a collective bargaining agreement, and the collective bargaining agreement provides for the uniform administration of workers' compensation benefits and compensation for professional athletes.

(2) The employer is a professional sports league, or is a member team of a professional sports league, and all of the following apply:

(a) The professional sports league operates as a single entity, whereby all of the players and coaches of the sports league are employees of the sports league and not of the individual member teams.

(b) The professional sports league at all times maintains workers' compensation insurance that provides coverage for the players and coaches of the sports league.

(c) Each individual member team of the professional sports league, pursuant to the organizational or operating documents of the sports league, is obligated to the sports league to pay to the sports league any workers' compensation claims that are not covered by the workers' compensation insurance maintained by the sports league.

If the administrator approves the employer's proof of coverage submitted under division (K) of this section, a professional athlete or coach who is an employee of the employer and the dependents of the professional athlete or coach are not entitled to apply for and shall not receive compensation or benefits under this chapter and Chapter 4121. of the Revised Code. The rights of such an athlete or coach and the dependents of such an athlete or coach under the laws of the state where

the policy was issued are the exclusive remedy against the employer for the athlete or coach if the athlete or coach suffers an injury or contracts an occupational disease in the course of employment, or for the dependents of the athlete or the coach if the athlete or coach is killed as a result of an injury or dies as a result of an occupational disease, regardless of the location where the injury was suffered or the occupational disease was contracted.

Sec. 4123.57. Partial disability compensation shall be paid as follows.

Except as provided in this section, not earlier than twenty-six weeks after the date of termination of the latest period of payments under section 4123.56 of the Revised Code or twenty-six weeks after the termination of wages in lieu of those payments, or not earlier than twenty-six weeks after the date of the injury or contraction of an occupational disease in the absence of payments under section 4123.56 of the Revised Code or wages in lieu of those payments, the employee may file an application with the bureau of workers' compensation for the determination of the percentage of the employee's permanent partial disability resulting from an injury or occupational disease.

Whenever the application is filed, the bureau shall send a copy of the application to the employee's employer or the employer's representative and shall schedule the employee for a medical examination by the bureau medical section. The bureau shall send a copy of the report of the medical examination to the employee, the employer, and their representatives. Thereafter, the administrator of workers' compensation shall review the employee's claim file and make a tentative order as

the evidence before the administrator at the time of the making of the order warrants. If the administrator determines that there is a conflict of evidence, the administrator shall send the application, along with the claimant's file, to the district hearing officer who shall set the application for a hearing.

If an employee fails to respond to an attempt to schedule a medical examination by the bureau medical section, or fails to attend a medical examination scheduled under this section without notice or explanation, the employee's application for a finding shall be dismissed without prejudice. The employee may refile the application. A dismissed application does not toll the continuing jurisdiction of the industrial commission under section 4123.52 of the Revised Code. The administrator shall adopt rules addressing the manner in which an employee will be notified of a possible dismissal and how an employee may refile an application for a determination.

The administrator shall notify the employee, the employer, and their representatives, in writing, of the tentative order and of the parties' right to request a hearing. Unless the employee, the employer, or their representative notifies the administrator, in writing, of an objection to the tentative order within twenty days after receipt of the notice thereof, the tentative order shall go into effect and the employee shall receive the compensation provided in the order. In no event shall there be a reconsideration of a tentative order issued under this division.

If the employee, the employer, or their representatives timely notify the administrator of an objection to the tentative order, the matter shall be referred to a district hearing officer who shall set the application for hearing with written

notices to all interested persons. Upon referral to a district hearing officer, the employer may obtain a medical examination of the employee, pursuant to rules of the industrial commission.

(A) The district hearing officer, upon the application, shall determine the percentage of the employee's permanent disability, except as is subject to division (B) of this section, based upon that condition of the employee resulting from the injury or occupational disease and causing permanent impairment evidenced by medical or clinical findings reasonably demonstrable. The employee shall receive sixty-six and two-thirds per cent of the employee's average weekly wage, but not more than a maximum of thirty-three and one-third per cent of the statewide average weekly wage as defined in division (C) of section 4123.62 of the Revised Code, per week regardless of the average weekly wage, for the number of weeks which equals the percentage of two hundred weeks. Except on application for reconsideration, review, or modification, which is filed within ten days after the date of receipt of the decision of the district hearing officer, in no instance shall the former award be modified unless it is found from medical or clinical findings that the condition of the claimant resulting from the injury has so progressed as to have increased the percentage of permanent partial disability. A staff hearing officer shall hear an application for reconsideration filed and the staff hearing officer's decision is final. An employee may file an application for a subsequent determination of the percentage of the employee's permanent disability. If such an application is filed, the bureau shall send a copy of the application to the employer or the employer's representative. No sooner than sixty days from the date of the mailing of the application to the employer or the employer's representative, the administrator

shall review the application. The administrator may require a medical examination or medical review of the employee. The administrator shall issue a tentative order based upon the evidence before the administrator, provided that if the administrator requires a medical examination or medical review, the administrator shall not issue the tentative order until the completion of the examination or review.

The employer may obtain a medical examination of the employee and may submit medical evidence at any stage of the process up to a hearing before the district hearing officer, pursuant to rules of the commission. The administrator shall notify the employee, the employer, and their representatives, in writing, of the nature and amount of any tentative order issued on an application requesting a subsequent determination of the percentage of an employee's permanent disability. An employee, employer, or their representatives may object to the tentative order within twenty days after the receipt of the notice thereof. If no timely objection is made, the tentative order shall go into effect. In no event shall there be a reconsideration of a tentative order issued under this division. If an objection is timely made, the application for a subsequent determination shall be referred to a district hearing officer who shall set the application for a hearing with written notice to all interested persons. No application for subsequent percentage determinations on the same claim for injury or occupational disease shall be accepted for review by the district hearing officer unless supported by substantial evidence of new and changed circumstances developing since the time of the hearing on the original or last determination.

No award shall be made under this division based upon a percentage of disability which, when taken with all other

percentages of permanent disability, exceeds one hundred per cent. If the percentage of the permanent disability of the employee equals or exceeds ninety per cent, compensation for permanent partial disability shall be paid for two hundred weeks.

Compensation payable under this division accrues and is payable to the employee from the date of last payment of compensation, or, in cases where no previous compensation has been paid, from the date of the injury or the date of the diagnosis of the occupational disease.

When an award under this division has been made prior to the death of an employee, all unpaid installments accrued or to accrue under the provisions of the award are payable to the surviving spouse, or if there is no surviving spouse, to the dependent children of the employee, and if there are no children surviving, then to other dependents as the administrator determines.

(B) For purposes of this division, "payable per week" means the seven-consecutive-day period in which compensation is paid in installments according to the schedule associated with the applicable injury as set forth in this division.

Compensation paid in weekly installments according to the schedule described in this division may only be commuted to one or more lump sum payments pursuant to the procedure set forth in section 4123.64 of the Revised Code.

In cases included in the following schedule the compensation payable per week to the employee is the statewide average weekly wage as defined in division (C) of section 4123.62 of the Revised Code per week and shall be paid in

installments according to the following schedule:

For the loss of a first finger, commonly known as a thumb, sixty weeks.

For the loss of a second finger, commonly called index finger, thirty-five weeks.

For the loss of a third finger, thirty weeks.

For the loss of a fourth finger, twenty weeks.

For the loss of a fifth finger, commonly known as the little finger, fifteen weeks.

The loss of a second, or distal, phalange of the thumb is considered equal to the loss of one half of such thumb; the loss of more than one half of such thumb is considered equal to the loss of the whole thumb.

The loss of the third, or distal, phalange of any finger is considered equal to the loss of one-third of the finger.

The loss of the middle, or second, phalange of any finger is considered equal to the loss of two-thirds of the finger.

The loss of more than the middle and distal phalanges of any finger is considered equal to the loss of the whole finger. In no case shall the amount received for more than one finger exceed the amount provided in this schedule for the loss of a hand.

For the loss of the metacarpal bone (bones of the palm) for the corresponding thumb, or fingers, add ten weeks to the number of weeks under this division.

For ankylosis (total stiffness of) or contractures (due to scars or injuries) which makes any of the fingers, thumbs, or

parts of either useless, the same number of weeks apply to the members or parts thereof as given for the loss thereof.

If the claimant has suffered the loss of two or more fingers by amputation or ankylosis and the nature of the claimant's employment in the course of which the claimant was working at the time of the injury or occupational disease is such that the impairment or disability resulting from the loss of fingers, or loss of use of fingers, exceeds the normal impairment or disability resulting from the loss of fingers, or loss of use of fingers, the administrator may take that fact into consideration and increase the award of compensation accordingly, but the award made shall not exceed the amount of compensation for loss of a hand.

For the loss of a hand, one hundred seventy-five weeks.

For the loss of an arm, two hundred twenty-five weeks.

For the loss of a great toe, thirty weeks.

For the loss of one of the toes other than the great toe, ten weeks.

The loss of more than two-thirds of any toe is considered equal to the loss of the whole toe.

The loss of less than two-thirds of any toe is considered no loss, except as to the great toe; the loss of the great toe up to the interphalangeal joint is co-equal to the loss of one-half of the great toe; the loss of the great toe beyond the interphalangeal joint is considered equal to the loss of the whole great toe.

For the loss of a foot, one hundred fifty weeks.

For the loss of a leg, two hundred weeks.

For the loss of the sight of an eye, one hundred twenty-five weeks.

For the permanent partial loss of sight of an eye, the portion of one hundred twenty-five weeks as the administrator in each case determines, based upon the percentage of vision actually lost as a result of the injury or occupational disease, but, in no case shall an award of compensation be made for less than twenty-five per cent loss of uncorrected vision. "Loss of uncorrected vision" means the percentage of vision actually lost as the result of the injury or occupational disease.

For the permanent and total loss of hearing of one ear, twenty-five weeks; but in no case shall an award of compensation be made for less than permanent and total loss of hearing of one ear.

For the permanent and total loss of hearing, one hundred twenty-five weeks; but, except pursuant to the next preceding paragraph, in no case shall an award of compensation be made for less than permanent and total loss of hearing.

In case an injury or occupational disease results in serious facial or head disfigurement which either impairs or may in the future impair the opportunities to secure or retain employment, the administrator shall make an award of compensation as it deems proper and equitable, in view of the nature of the disfigurement, and not to exceed the sum of ten thousand dollars. For the purpose of making the award, it is not material whether the employee is gainfully employed in any occupation or trade at the time of the administrator's determination.

When an award under this division has been made prior to

the death of an employee all unpaid installments accrued or to accrue under the provisions of the award shall be payable to the surviving spouse, or if there is no surviving spouse, to the dependent children of the employee and if there are no such children, then to such dependents as the administrator determines.

When an employee has sustained the loss of a member by severance, but no award has been made on account thereof prior to the employee's death, the administrator shall make an award in accordance with this division for the loss which shall be payable to the surviving spouse, or if there is no surviving spouse, to the dependent children of the employee and if there are no such children, then to such dependents as the administrator determines.

(C) Compensation for partial impairment under divisions (A) and (B) of this section is in addition to the compensation paid the employee pursuant to section 4123.56 of the Revised Code. A claimant may receive compensation under divisions (A) and (B) of this section.

In all cases arising under division (B) of this section, if it is determined by any one of the following: (1) the amputee clinic at University hospital, Ohio state university; (2) the opportunities for Ohioans with disabilities agency; (3) an amputee clinic or prescribing physician approved by the administrator or the administrator's designee, that an injured or disabled employee is in need of an artificial appliance, or in need of a repair thereof, regardless of whether the appliance or its repair will be serviceable in the vocational rehabilitation of the injured employee, and regardless of whether the employee has returned to or can ever again return to

any gainful employment, the bureau shall pay the cost of the artificial appliance or its repair out of the surplus created by division (B) of section 4123.34 of the Revised Code.

Notwithstanding any provision in this division to the contrary, when a claimant has sustained an amputation or a loss enumerated in division (B) of this section as a result of an injury or occupational disease, the administrator shall pay the cost to purchase, repair, or replace a prosthetic device as defined in division (B) of section 4123.52 from the surplus fund account created pursuant to division (B) of section 4123.34 of the Revised Code, even if no award has been made under division (B) of this section.

In those cases where an opportunities for Ohioans with disabilities agency's recommendation that an injured or disabled employee is in need of an artificial appliance would conflict with their state plan, adopted pursuant to the "Rehabilitation Act of 1973," 87 Stat. 355, 29 U.S.C.A. 701, the administrator or the administrator's designee or the bureau may obtain a recommendation from an amputee clinic or prescribing physician that they determine appropriate.

(D) If an employee of a state fund employer makes application for a finding and the administrator finds that the employee has contracted silicosis as defined in division (Y), or coal miners' pneumoconiosis as defined in division (Z), or asbestosis as defined in division (BB) of section 4123.68 of the Revised Code, and that a change of such employee's occupation is medically advisable in order to decrease substantially further exposure to silica dust, asbestos, or coal dust and if the employee, after the finding, has changed or shall change the employee's occupation to an occupation in which the exposure to

silica dust, asbestos, or coal dust is substantially decreased, the administrator shall allow to the employee an amount equal to fifty per cent of the statewide average weekly wage per week for a period of thirty weeks, commencing as of the date of the discontinuance or change, and for a period of one hundred weeks immediately following the expiration of the period of thirty weeks, the employee shall receive sixty-six and two-thirds per cent of the loss of wages resulting directly and solely from the change of occupation but not to exceed a maximum of an amount equal to fifty per cent of the statewide average weekly wage per week. No such employee is entitled to receive more than one allowance on account of discontinuance of employment or change of occupation and benefits shall cease for any period during which the employee is employed in an occupation in which the exposure to silica dust, asbestos, or coal dust is not substantially less than the exposure in the occupation in which the employee was formerly employed or for any period during which the employee may be entitled to receive compensation or benefits under section 4123.68 of the Revised Code on account of disability from silicosis, asbestosis, or coal miners' pneumoconiosis. An award for change of occupation for a coal miner who has contracted coal miners' pneumoconiosis may be granted under this division even though the coal miner continues employment with the same employer, so long as the coal miner's employment subsequent to the change is such that the coal miner's exposure to coal dust is substantially decreased and a change of occupation is certified by the claimant as permanent. The administrator may accord to the employee medical and other benefits in accordance with section 4123.66 of the Revised Code.

(E) If a firefighter or police officer makes application for a finding and the administrator finds that the firefighter

or police officer has contracted a cardiovascular and pulmonary disease as defined in division (W) of section 4123.68 of the Revised Code, and that a change of the firefighter's or police officer's occupation is medically advisable in order to decrease substantially further exposure to smoke, toxic gases, chemical fumes, and other toxic vapors, and if the firefighter, or police officer, after the finding, has changed or changes occupation to an occupation in which the exposure to smoke, toxic gases, chemical fumes, and other toxic vapors is substantially decreased, the administrator shall allow to the firefighter or police officer an amount equal to fifty per cent of the statewide average weekly wage per week for a period of thirty weeks, commencing as of the date of the discontinuance or change, and for a period of seventy-five weeks immediately following the expiration of the period of thirty weeks the administrator shall allow the firefighter or police officer sixty-six and two-thirds per cent of the loss of wages resulting directly and solely from the change of occupation but not to exceed a maximum of an amount equal to fifty per cent of the statewide average weekly wage per week. No such firefighter or police officer is entitled to receive more than one allowance on account of discontinuance of employment or change of occupation and benefits shall cease for any period during which the firefighter or police officer is employed in an occupation in which the exposure to smoke, toxic gases, chemical fumes, and other toxic vapors is not substantially less than the exposure in the occupation in which the firefighter or police officer was formerly employed or for any period during which the firefighter or police officer may be entitled to receive compensation or benefits under section 4123.68 of the Revised Code on account of disability from a cardiovascular and pulmonary disease. The administrator may accord to the firefighter or police officer

medical and other benefits in accordance with section 4123.66 of the Revised Code.

(F) An order issued under this section is appealable pursuant to section 4123.511 of the Revised Code but is not appealable to court under section 4123.512 of the Revised Code.

Sec. 4123.66. (A) In addition to the compensation provided for in this chapter, the administrator of workers' compensation shall disburse and pay from the state insurance fund the amounts for medical, nurse, and hospital services and medicine as the administrator deems proper and, in case death ensues from the injury or occupational disease, the administrator shall disburse and pay from the fund reasonable funeral expenses in an amount not to exceed seven thousand five hundred dollars. The bureau of workers' compensation shall reimburse anyone, whether dependent, volunteer, or otherwise, who pays the funeral expenses of any employee whose death ensues from any injury or occupational disease as provided in this section. The administrator may adopt rules, with the advice and consent of the bureau of workers' compensation board of directors, with respect to furnishing medical, nurse, and hospital service and medicine to injured or disabled employees entitled thereto, and for the payment therefor. In case an injury or industrial accident that injures an employee also causes damage to the employee's eyeglasses, artificial teeth or other denture, or hearing aid, or in the event an injury or occupational disease makes it necessary or advisable to replace, repair, or adjust the same, the bureau shall disburse and pay a reasonable amount to repair or replace the same.

(B) The administrator, in the rules the administrator adopts pursuant to division (A) of this section, may adopt rules

specifying the circumstances under which the bureau may make immediate payment for the first fill of prescription drugs for medical conditions identified in an application for compensation or benefits under section 4123.84 or 4123.85 of the Revised Code that occurs prior to the date the administrator issues an initial determination order under division (B) of section 4123.511 of the Revised Code. If the claim is ultimately disallowed in a final administrative or judicial order, and if the employer is a state fund employer who pays assessments into the surplus fund account created under section 4123.34 of the Revised Code, the payments for medical services made pursuant to this division for the first fill of prescription drugs shall be charged to and paid from the surplus fund account and not charged through the state insurance fund to the employer against whom the claim was filed.

(C)(1) If an employer or a welfare plan has provided to or on behalf of an employee any benefits or compensation for an injury or occupational disease and that injury or occupational disease is determined compensable under this chapter, the employer or a welfare plan may request that the administrator reimburse the employer or welfare plan for the amount the employer or welfare plan paid to or on behalf of the employee in compensation or benefits. The administrator shall reimburse the employer or welfare plan for the compensation and benefits paid if, at the time the employer or welfare plan provides the benefits or compensation to or on behalf of employee, the injury or occupational disease had not been determined to be compensable under this chapter and if the employee was not receiving compensation or benefits under this chapter for that injury or occupational disease. The administrator shall reimburse the employer or welfare plan in the amount that the

administrator would have paid to or on behalf of the employee under this chapter if the injury or occupational disease originally would have been determined compensable under this chapter. If the employer is a merit-rated employer, the administrator shall adjust the amount of premium next due from the employer according to the amount the administrator pays the employer. The administrator shall adopt rules, in accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code, to implement this division.

(2) As used in this division, "welfare plan" has the same meaning as in division (1) of 29 U.S.C.A. 1002.

(D)(1) Subject to the requirements of division (D)(2) of this section, the administrator may make a payment of up to five hundred dollars to either of the following:

(a) The centers of medicare and medicaid services, for reimbursement of conditional payments made pursuant to the "Medicare Secondary Payer Act," 42 U.S.C. 1395y;

(b) The Ohio department of medicaid, or a medical assistance provider to whom the department has assigned a right of recovery for a claim for which the department has notified the provider that the department intends to recoup the department's prior payment for the claim, for reimbursement under sections 5160.35 to 5160.43 of the Revised Code for the cost of medical assistance paid on behalf of a medical assistance recipient.

(2) The administrator may make a payment under division (D)(1) of this section if the administrator makes a reasonable determination that ~~both~~ all of the following apply:

(a) The payment is ~~for reimbursement of benefits for an~~

~~injury or occupational disease~~in response to a request from a party listed in division (D)(1) of this section.

(b) ~~The~~ There is an injury or occupational disease that is compensable, or is likely to be compensable, under this chapter or Chapter 4121., 4127., or 4131. of the Revised Code.

(c) The payment will resolve the request from a party listed in division (D)(1) of this section.

(3) Any payment made pursuant to this division shall be charged to and paid from the surplus fund account created under section 4123.34 of the Revised Code.

(4) Nothing in this division shall be construed as limiting the centers of medicare and medicaid services, the department, or any other entity with a lawful right to reimbursement from recovering sums greater than five hundred dollars.

(5) The administrator may adopt rules, with the advice and consent of the bureau of workers' compensation board of directors, to implement this division.

Sec. 4125.07. (A) As used in this section, "self-insuring employer" has the same meaning as in section 4123.01 of the Revised Code.

(B) Not later than thirty calendar days after the date on which a professional employer organization agreement is terminated, the professional employer organization is adjudged bankrupt, the professional employer organization ceases operations within the state of Ohio, or the registration of the professional employer organization is revoked, the professional employer organization shall submit to the administrator of workers' compensation and each client employer associated with

that professional employer organization a completed workers' compensation lease termination notice form provided by the administrator. ~~The~~ If a professional employer organization is not a self-insuring employer, the completed form shall include all client payroll and claim information listed in a format specified by the administrator and notice of all workers' compensation claims that have been reported to the professional employer organization in accordance with its internal reporting policies.

~~(C)(1) If a professional employer organization that is a self-insuring employer is required to submit a workers' compensation lease termination notice form under division (B) of this section, not later than thirty calendar days after the lease termination the professional employer organization shall submit all of the following to the administrator for any years necessary for the administrator to develop a state fund experience modification factor for each client employer involved in the lease termination:~~

~~(a) The payroll of each client employer involved in the lease termination, organized by manual classification and year;~~

~~(b) The medical and indemnity costs of each client employer involved in the lease termination, organized by claim;~~

~~(c) Any other information the administrator may require to develop a state fund experience modification factor for each client employer involved in the lease termination.~~

~~(2) The administrator may require a professional employer organization to submit the information required under division (C)(1) of this section at additional times after the initial submission if the administrator determines that the information~~

~~is necessary for the administrator to develop a state fund experience modification factor.~~

~~(3) The administrator may revoke or refuse to renew a professional employer organization's status as a self-insuring employer if the professional employer organization fails to provide information requested by the administrator under division (C)(1) or (2) of this section.~~

~~(D) The administrator shall use the information provided under division (C) of this section to develop a state fund experience modification factor for each client employer involved in a lease termination with a professional employer organization that is a self-insuring employer.~~

~~(E)~~ (C) A professional employer organization shall report any transfer of employees between related professional employer organization entities or professional employer organization reporting entities to the administrator within fourteen calendar days after the date of the transfer on a form prescribed by the administrator. ~~The~~ If the professional employer organization is not a self-insuring employer, the professional employer organization or professional employer organization reporting entity shall include in the form all client payroll and claim information regarding the transferred employees listed in a format specified by the administrator and a notice of all workers' compensation claims that have been reported to the professional employer organization or professional employer organization reporting entity in accordance with the internal reporting policies of the professional employer organization or professional employer organization reporting entity.

~~(F) Prior to entering into a professional employer organization agreement with a client employer, a professional~~

~~employer organization shall disclose in writing to the client employer the reporting requirements that apply to the professional employer organization under division (C) of this section and that the administrator must develop a state fund experience modification factor for each client employer involved in a lease termination with a professional employer organization that is a self-insuring employer.~~

Sec. 4133.10. (A) As used in this section, "self-insuring employer" has the same meaning as in section 4123.01 of the Revised Code.

(B) Not later than thirty calendar days after the date on which an alternate employer organization agreement is terminated, the alternate employer organization is adjudged bankrupt, the alternate employer organization ceases operations within the state of Ohio, or the registration of the alternate employer organization is revoked, the alternate employer organization shall submit to the administrator of workers' compensation and each client employer associated with that alternate employer organization a completed workers' compensation lease termination notice form provided by the administrator. ~~The~~ If an alternate employer organization is not a self-insuring employer, the completed form shall include all client payroll and claim information listed in a format specified by the administrator and notice of all workers' compensation claims that have been reported to the alternate employer organization in accordance with its internal reporting policies.

~~(C)(1) If a alternate employer organization that is a self-insuring employer is required to submit a workers' compensation lease termination notice form under division (B) of~~

~~this section, not later than thirty calendar days after the lease termination the alternate employer organization shall submit all of the following to the administrator for any years necessary for the administrator to develop a state fund experience modification factor for each client employer involved in the lease termination:~~

~~(a) The payroll of each client employer involved in the lease termination, organized by manual classification and year;~~

~~(b) The medical and indemnity costs of each client employer involved in the lease termination, organized by claim;~~

~~(c) Any other information the administrator may require to develop a state fund experience modification factor for each client employer involved in the lease termination.~~

~~(2) The administrator may require an alternate employer organization to submit the information required under division (C)(1) of this section at additional times after the initial submission if the administrator determines that the information is necessary for the administrator to develop a state fund experience modification factor.~~

~~(3) The administrator may revoke or refuse to renew an alternate employer organization's status as a self-insuring employer if the alternate employer organization fails to provide information requested by the administrator under division (C)(1) or (2) of this section.~~

~~(D) The administrator shall use the information provided under division (C) of this section to develop a state fund experience modification factor for each client employer involved in a lease termination with an alternate employer organization that is a self-insuring employer.~~

~~(E)~~ (C) An alternate employer organization shall report any transfer of employees between related alternate employer organization entities to the administrator within fourteen calendar days after the date of the transfer on a form prescribed by the administrator. ~~The~~ If the alternate employer organization is not a self-insuring employer, the alternate employer organization shall include in the form all client payroll and claim information regarding the transferred employees listed in a format specified by the administrator and a notice of all workers' compensation claims that have been reported to the alternate employer organization in accordance with the internal reporting policies of the alternate employer organization.

~~(F) Prior to entering into an alternate employer organization agreement with a client employer, an alternate employer organization shall disclose in writing to the client employer the reporting requirements that apply to the alternate employer organization under division (C) of this section and that the administrator must develop a state fund experience modification factor for each client employer involved in a lease termination with an alternate employer organization that is a self-insuring employer.~~

Sec. 4167.01. As used in this chapter:

(A) "Public employer" means any of the following:

(1) The state and its instrumentalities;

(2) Any political subdivisions and their instrumentalities, including any county, county hospital, municipal corporation, city, village, township, park district, school district, state institution of higher learning, public or

special district, state agency, authority, commission, or board;

(3) Any other branch of public employment not mentioned in division (A)(1) or (2) of this section.

(B) "Public employee" means any individual who engages to furnish services subject to the direction and control of a public employer, including those individuals working for a private employer who has contracted with a public employer and over whom the national labor relations board has declined jurisdiction. "Public employee" does not mean any of the following:

(1) A peace officer employed by a public employer as defined in division (A)(2) of this section or any member of the organized militia ordered to duty by state authority pursuant to Chapter 5923. of the Revised Code;

(2) Any person who engages to furnish services subject to the direction and control of a public employer but does not receive compensation, either directly or indirectly, for those services;

(3) Any forest-fire investigator, natural resources officer, wildlife officer, or preserve officer;

(4) Any person incarcerated in an alternative residential facility, community-based correctional facility, jail, halfway house, or prison, as those terms are defined in section 2929.01 of the Revised Code.

(C) "Public employee representative" means an employee organization certified by the state employment relations board under section 4117.05 of the Revised Code as the exclusive representative of the public employees in a bargaining unit.

(D) "Employment risk reduction standard" means a standard which requires conditions, or the adoption or use of one or more practices, means, methods, operations, or processes, reasonably necessary or appropriate to provide safe and healthful employment and places of employment.

(E) "Ohio employment risk reduction standard" means any risk reduction standard adopted or issued under this chapter.

(F) "Undue hardship" means any requirement imposed under this chapter or a rule or order issued thereunder that would require a public employer to take an action with significant difficulty or expense when considered in light of all of the following factors:

(1) The nature and cost of the action required under this chapter;

(2) The overall financial resources of the public employer involved in the action;

(3) The number of persons employed by the public employer at the particular location where the action may be required;

(4) The effect on expenses and resources or the impact otherwise of the action required upon the operations of the public employer at the location where the action may be required;

(5) The overall size of the public employer with respect to the number of its public employees;

(6) The number, type, and location of the public employer's operations, including the composition, structure, and functions of the workforce of the public entity;

(7) The geographic separateness, administrative, or fiscal

relationship of the public employer's operations to the whole public employer.

Sec. 4167.10. (A) In order to carry out the purposes of this chapter, the administrator of workers' compensation or the administrator's designee shall, as provided in this section, enter without delay during normal working hours and at other reasonable times, to inspect and investigate any plant, facility, establishment, construction site, or any other area, workplace, or environment where work is being performed by a public employee of a public employer, and any place of employment and all pertinent conditions, structures, machines, apparatus, devices, equipment, and materials therein, and question privately any public employer, administrator, department head, operator, agent, or public employee. The authority to inspect and investigate includes the taking of environmental samples, the taking and obtaining of photographs related to the purposes of the inspection or investigation, the examination of records required to be kept under section 4167.11 of the Revised Code and other documents and records relevant to the inspection and investigation, the issuance of subpoenas, and the conducting of tests and other studies reasonably calculated to serve the purposes of implementing and enforcing this chapter. Except as provided in this section, the administrator or the administrator's designee shall conduct ~~scheduled~~ the inspections and investigations only pursuant to rules adopted under section 4167.02 of the Revised Code, a request to do so by a public employee or public employee representative, or the notification the administrator receives pursuant to division (B) of section 4167.06 of the Revised Code and only if the administrator or the administrator's designee complies with this section. The administrator or the administrator's designee shall

conduct all requested or required inspections within a reasonable amount of time following receipt of the request or notification.

(B)(1) Any public employee or public employee representative who believes that a violation of an Ohio employment risk reduction standard exists that threatens physical harm, or that an imminent danger exists, may request an inspection by giving written notice to the administrator or the administrator's designee of the violation or danger. The notice shall set forth with reasonable particularity the grounds for the notice, and shall be signed by the public employee or public employee representative. The names of individual public employees making the notice or referred to therein shall not appear in the copy provided to the public employer pursuant to division (B)(2) of this section and shall be kept confidential.

(2) If, upon receipt of a notification pursuant to division (B)(1) of this section, the administrator determines that there are no reasonable grounds to believe that a violation or danger exists, the administrator shall inform the public employee or public employee representative in writing of the determination. If, upon receipt of a notification, the administrator determines that there are reasonable grounds to believe that a violation or danger exists, the administrator shall, within one week, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and any legal holiday as defined in section 1.14 of the Revised Code, after receipt of the notification, notify the public employer, by certified mail, return receipt requested, of the alleged violation or danger. The notice provided to the public employer or the public employer's agent shall inform the public employer of the alleged violation or danger and that the administrator or the administrator's designee will investigate and inspect the

public employer's workplace as provided in this section. The public employer must respond to the administrator, in a method determined by the administrator, concerning the alleged violation or danger, within thirty days after receipt of the notice. If the public employer does not correct the violation or danger within the thirty-day period or if the public employer fails to respond within that time period, the administrator or the administrator's designee shall investigate and inspect the public employer's workplace as provided in this section. The administrator or the administrator's designee shall not conduct any inspection prior to the end of the thirty-day period unless requested or permitted by the public employer. The administrator may, at any time upon the request of the public employer, inspect and investigate any violation or danger alleged to exist at the public employer's place of employment.

(3) The authority of the administrator or the administrator's designee to investigate and inspect a premises pursuant to a public employee or public employee representative notification is not limited to the alleged violation or danger contained in the notification. The administrator or the administrator's designee may investigate and inspect any other area of the premises where there is reason to believe that a violation or danger exists. In addition, if the administrator or the administrator's designee detects any obvious or apparent violation at any temporary place of employment while en route to the premises to be inspected or investigated, and that violation presents a substantial probability that the condition or practice could result in death or serious physical harm, the administrator or the administrator's designee may use any of the enforcement mechanisms provided in this section to correct or remove the condition or practice.

(4) If, during an inspection or investigation, the administrator or the administrator's designee finds any condition or practice in any place of employment that presents a substantial probability that the condition or practice could result in death or serious physical harm, after notifying the employer of the administrator's intent to issue an order, the administrator shall issue an order, or the administrator's designee shall issue an order after consultation with the administrator and upon the recommendation of the administrator, which prohibits the employment of any public employee or any continuing operation or process under such condition or practice until necessary steps are taken to correct or remove the condition or practice. The order shall not be effective for more than fifteen days, unless a court of competent jurisdiction otherwise orders as provided in section 4167.14 of the Revised Code.

(C) In making any inspections or investigations under this chapter, the administrator or the administrator's designee may administer oaths and require, by subpoena, the attendance and testimony of witnesses and the production of evidence under oath. Witnesses shall receive the fees and mileage provided for under section 119.094 of the Revised Code. In the case of contumacy, failure, or refusal of any person to comply with an order or any subpoena lawfully issued, or upon the refusal of any witness to testify to any matter regarding which the witness may lawfully be interrogated, a judge of the court of common pleas of any county in this state, on the application of the administrator or the administrator's designee, shall issue an order requiring the person to appear and to produce evidence if, as, and when so ordered, and to give testimony relating to the matter under investigation or in question. The court may punish

any failure to obey the order of the court as a contempt thereof.

(D) If, upon inspection or investigation, the administrator or the administrator's designee believes that a public employer has violated any requirement of this chapter or any rule, Ohio employment risk reduction standard, or order adopted or issued pursuant thereto, the administrator or the administrator's designee shall, with reasonable promptness, issue a citation to the public employer. The citation shall be in writing and describe with particularity the nature of the alleged violation, including a reference to the provision of law, Ohio employment risk reduction standard, rule, or order alleged to have been violated. In addition, the citation shall fix a time for the abatement of the violation, as provided in division (H) of this section. The administrator may prescribe procedures for the issuance of a notice with respect to minor violations and for enforcement of minor violations that have no direct or immediate relationship to safety or health.

(E) Upon receipt of any citation under this section, the public employer shall immediately post the citation, or a copy thereof, at or near each place an alleged violation referred to in the citation occurred.

(F) The administrator may not issue a citation under this section after the expiration of six months following the final occurrence of any violation.

(G) If the administrator issues a citation pursuant to this section, the administrator shall mail the citation to the public employer by certified mail, return receipt requested. The public employer has fourteen days after receipt of the citation within which to notify the administrator that the employer

wishes to contest the citation. If the employer notifies the administrator within the fourteen days that the employer wishes to contest the citation, or if within fourteen days after the issuance of a citation a public employee or public employee representative files notice that the time period fixed in the citation for the abatement of the violation is unreasonable, the administrator shall hold an adjudication hearing in accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code.

(H) In establishing the time limits in which a public employer must abate a violation under this section, the administrator shall consider the costs to the public employer, the size and financial resources of the public employer, the severity of the violation, the technological feasibility of the public employer's ability to comply with requirements of the citation, the possible present and future detriment to the health and safety of any public employee for failure of the public employer to comply with requirements of the citation, and such other factors as the administrator determines appropriate. The administrator may, after considering the above factors, permit the public employer to comply with the citation over a period of up to two years and may extend that period an additional one year, as the administrator determines appropriate.

(I) Any public employer may request the administrator to conduct an employment risk reduction inspection of the public employer's place of employment. The administrator or the administrator's designee shall conduct the inspection within a reasonable amount of time following the request. Neither the administrator nor any other person may use any information obtained from the inspection for a period not to exceed three years in any proceeding for a violation of this chapter or any

rule or order issued thereunder nor in any other action in any court in this state.

Sec. 5145.163. (A) As used in this section:

(1) "Customer model enterprise" means an enterprise conducted under a federal prison industries enhancement certification program in which a private party participates in the enterprise only as a purchaser of goods and services.

(2) "Employer model enterprise" means an enterprise conducted under a federal prison industries enhancement certification program in which a private party participates in the enterprise as an operator of the enterprise.

(3) "Injury" and "occupational disease" have the same meanings as in section 4123.01 of the Revised Code if sustained or contracted in the course of, and arising out of, participation in authorized work activity in the federal prison industries enhancement certification program.

(4) ~~"Inmate"~~"Incarcerated worker" means any person who is committed to the custody of the department of rehabilitation and correction and who is participating in an Ohio penal industries program that is under the federal prison industries enhancement certification program.

(5) "Federal prison industries enhancement certification program" means the program authorized pursuant to 18 U.S.C. 1761.

(6) "Injured incarcerated worker" means an individual to which division (G) of this section applies.

(7) "Compensation" means compensation as provided in sections 4123.56 to 4123.58 of the Revised Code.

(B) No private party shall participate in an employer model enterprise in this state unless the private party is approved by the director of rehabilitation and correction in accordance with division (C) of this section.

(C) The director may approve a private party to participate in an employer model enterprise only if the private party meets the following requirements:

(1) ~~The private party provides proof of workers' compensation coverage furnished by the bureau of workers' compensation.~~

~~(2)~~ The private party carries liability insurance in an amount the director determines to be sufficient.

~~(3)~~(2) The private party does not have an unresolved finding for recovery by the auditor of state under section 9.24 of the Revised Code.

~~(D)(1) If the enterprise for which an inmate works is a customer model enterprise, the~~ (D) The department ~~may~~ shall treat ~~the inmate~~ an incarcerated worker, regardless of whether the incarcerated worker works in a customer model enterprise or an employer model enterprise, as an employee of the department for the purpose of workers' compensation coverage in accordance with Chapters 4121.~~, 4127., and 4131.~~ and 4123. of the Revised Code.

~~(2) If the enterprise for which an inmate works is an employer model enterprise, the private participant may treat the inmate as an employee of the private participant for the purpose of workers' compensation coverage in accordance with Chapters 4121., 4123., 4127., and 4131. of the Revised Code.~~

(E) Except as provided in division (D) of this section,

~~inmates~~ incarcerated workers are not employees of the department ~~of rehabilitation and correction or the private participant in an enterprise~~.

(F)(1) An ~~inmate~~ incarcerated worker who is injured or who contracts an occupational disease in the course of and arising out of participation in authorized work activity in the federal prison industries enhancement certification program may request the department file a claim ~~for compensation or benefits~~ with the bureau of workers' compensation under Chapters 4121.~~,~~ and 4123.~~, 4127., and 4131.~~ of the Revised Code ~~while the claimant is in the custody of the department~~ within the timeframe provided for in section 4123.84 or 4123.85 of the Revised Code.

(2) The dependent of an ~~inmate~~ incarcerated worker who is killed or dies as the result of an injury or occupational disease contracted in the course of and arising out of participation in authorized work activity in the federal prison industries enhancement certification program may request the department file a claim ~~for compensation and benefits~~ with the bureau under Chapters 4121.~~,~~ and 4123.~~, 4127., and 4131.~~ of the Revised Code within the timeframe provided for in section 4123.84 or 4123.85 of the Revised Code. A party may use the appeals process under Chapters 4121. and 4123. of the Revised Code regarding applications filed under division (F)(2) of this section.

(G) Notwithstanding any provision of Chapter 4121. or 4123. of the Revised Code to the contrary, ~~an inmate who files a claim pursuant to this section~~if the department determines that an incarcerated worker was injured or contracted an occupational disease in the course of and arising out of participation in authorized work activity in the federal prison industries

enhancement certification program, whether by external accidental means or accidental in character or result, both of the following apply to the individual while that individual is in the custody of the department:

(1) The individual may receive medical treatment for the injury or occupational disease.

(2) The individual is barred from filing for compensation with the department or the bureau.

~~shall receive~~ (H) While an injured incarcerated worker is in the custody of the department, medical recommendations pertaining to, and medical treatment ~~and have medical determinations for purposes of Chapter 4121. and 4123. of the Revised Code made by the department's medical providers~~for, the injured incarcerated worker shall be provided exclusively through the department's network of providers. ~~Medical~~

(I) Claim allowance determinations made by the ~~department's providers~~ department shall be limited to initial claim allowances and requests for additional conditions. ~~The claimant~~ An injured incarcerated worker may ~~request~~ appeal the department's claim allowance determination or medical treatment determination by requesting a review by the department's chief medical officer. In the event of ~~an~~ a further appeal, the ~~claimant~~ injured incarcerated worker may receive a medical evaluation from a medical practitioner affiliated within the department's network of third-party medical contractors ~~or a medical practitioner in a managed care organization certified by the bureau of workers' compensation under section 4121.44 of the Revised Code and~~ located in Franklin county.

~~(H) In~~ (J) Except for appeals regarding determinations

under division (I) of this section, and notwithstanding any provision of Chapter 4121. or 4123. of the Revised Code to the contrary, an injured incarcerated worker is barred from appealing a determination made under this section while incarcerated.

(K) After an injured incarcerated worker is released from incarceration, all of the following apply:

(1) A party may use the appeals process under Chapters 4121. and 4123. of the Revised Code regarding any application filed by an injured incarcerated worker.

(2) The released individual may receive medical treatment consistent with Chapters 4121. and 4123. of the Revised Code.

(3) The released individual may seek compensation through the bureau consistent with Chapters 4121. and 4123. of the Revised Code.

(L) Except for medical treatment as allowed under division (G) of this section, in accordance with division (J) of section 4123.54 of the Revised Code, compensation or medical benefits are not payable to or on behalf of ~~a claimant~~ an injured incarcerated worker during the period of confinement of the ~~claimant~~ injured incarcerated worker in any correctional institution ~~or county jail~~. ~~Any remaining amount of an award of compensation or benefits for an injury or occupational disease arising out of participation in authorized work activity in the federal prison industries enhancement certification program shall be paid to or on behalf of a claimant after the claimant is released from imprisonment.~~ If ~~a claimant~~ an injured incarcerated worker is reimprisoned within the custody of the department, compensation ~~and benefits~~ shall be suspended during

the ~~claimant's~~ injured incarcerated worker's imprisonment but ~~shall~~ may resume on the ~~claimant's~~ worker's release from imprisonment. The department may pay for medical benefits in accordance with division (G) of this section.

~~(I)~~(M) After an injured incarcerated worker is released from the department's custody, regardless of whether the worker worked in a customer model enterprise or an employer model enterprise, all claim costs, other than medical costs paid by the department while the worker was in the department's custody, shall be paid by the department in accordance with the requirements of Chapters 4121. and 4123. of the Revised Code.

(N) An ~~inmate~~ incarcerated worker shall voluntarily consent to participate in a federal prison industries enhancement certification program prior to commencing participation in the program. Such consent disclaims the ~~inmate's~~ worker's ability to choose a medical provider while the ~~inmate~~ worker is imprisoned and subjects the ~~inmate~~ worker to the requirements of this section.

Section 2. That existing sections 4121.12, 4121.121, 4121.13, 4121.41, 4121.45, 4123.44, 4123.52, 4123.54, 4123.57, 4123.66, 4125.07, 4133.10, 4167.01, 4167.10, and 5145.163 of the Revised Code are hereby repealed.

Section 3. That sections 4167.25, 4167.27, and 4167.28 of the Revised Code are hereby repealed.

Section 4. All items in this act are hereby appropriated out of any moneys in the state treasury to the credit of the designated fund. For all appropriations made in this act, those in the first column are for fiscal year 2026 and those in the second column are for fiscal year 2027.

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1	2	3	4	5
A		BWC BUREAU OF WORKERS COMPENSATION		
B	Dedicated Purpose Fund Group			
C	7023 855407	Claims, Risk and Medical Management	$123,887,269	$128,050,202
D	7023 855409	Administrative Services	$167,215,851	$168,637,822
E	7023 855410	Attorney General Payments	$6,384,084	$6,607,527
F	8220 855606	Coal Workers' Fund	$197,040	$197,040
G	8230 855608	Marine Industry	$75,000	$75,000
H	8250 855605	Disabled Workers Relief Fund	$201,000	$201,000
I	8260 855609	Safety and Hygiene Operating	$21,471,244	$23,281,721
J	8260 855610	Safety Grants	$34,300,000	$34,300,000
K	8260 855611	Health and Safety Initiative	$3,000,000	$3,000,000
L	8260 855612	Safety Campaign	$250,000	$250,000
M	8260 855619	Safety and Health Workforce Safety Innovation Center	$14,700,000	$14,700,000

N	Dedicated Purpose Fund Group Total		$371,681,488	$379,300,312
O	Federal Fund Group			
P	3490	855601 OSHA Enforcement	$1,751,293	$1,751,293
Q	3FW0	855614 BLS SOII Grant	$199,000	$199,000
R	Federal Fund Group Total		$1,950,293	$1,950,293
S	TOTAL ALL BUDGET FUND GROUPS		$373,631,781	$381,250,605

Section 5. WORKERS' COMPENSATION FRAUD UNIT

Of the foregoing appropriation item 855410, Attorney General Payments, $869,610 in fiscal year 2026 and $900,046 in fiscal year 2027 shall be used to fund the expenses of the Workers' Compensation Fraud Unit within the Attorney General's Office. These payments shall be processed at the beginning of each quarter of each fiscal year and deposited into the Workers' Compensation Section Fund (Fund 1950) used by the Attorney General.

SAFETY AND HYGIENE

Notwithstanding section 4121.37 of the Revised Code, as directed by the Bureau of Workers' Compensation, the Treasurer of State shall remit up to $73,721,244 cash in fiscal year 2026 and up to $75,531,721 cash in fiscal year 2027 from the State Insurance Fund to the state treasury to the credit of the Safety and Hygiene Fund (Fund 8260) to be used to fund appropriation lines 855609 for the purpose of operating a Safety and Hygiene program, 855610 to be used for Safety Grants, 855611 for the purpose of operating a Health and Wellness Program, 855612 for the purpose of operating a statewide safety awareness and

education campaign, and 855619 for the purpose of funding a workforce safety innovation center program.

FEDERAL GRANT PROGRAMS

The foregoing appropriation item 855609, Safety and Hygiene Operating, may be used to provide the state match for federal grant funding received by the Division of Safety and Hygiene.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

The Bureau of Workers' Compensation and the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Agency may enter into an interagency agreement for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services and staff to mutually eligible clients. The Bureau may provide funds from the State Insurance Fund to fund vocational rehabilitation services and staff in accordance with the interagency agreement.

Section 6. DEPUTY INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR BWC AND OIC FUNDING

To pay for the FY 2026 costs related to the Deputy Inspector General for the Bureau of Workers' Compensation and Industrial Commission, on July 1, 2025, and January 1, 2026, or as soon as possible thereafter, the Director of Budget and Management shall transfer $212,500 cash from the Workers' Compensation Fund (Fund 7023) to the Deputy Inspector General for the Bureau of Workers' Compensation and Industrial Commission Fund (Fund 5FT0).

To pay for the FY 2027 costs related to the Deputy Inspector General for the Bureau of Workers' Compensation and Industrial Commission, on July 1, 2026, and January 1, 2027, or as soon as possible thereafter, the Director of Budget and

Management shall transfer $212,500 cash from the Workers' Compensation Fund (Fund 7023) to the Deputy Inspector General for the Bureau of Workers' Compensation and Industrial Commission Fund (Fund 5FT0).

If additional amounts are needed, the Inspector General may seek Controlling Board approval for additional transfers of cash and to increase the amount appropriated in appropriation item 965604, Deputy Inspector General for the Bureau of Workers' Compensation and Industrial Commission.

Section 7. The amendment of sections 4123.52 and 4123.57 of the Revised Code by this act applies to claims pending on or arising on or after the effective date of this section.

Section 8. This Section and Sections 4, 5, and 6 of this act are exempt from the referendum under Ohio Constitution, Article II, Section 1d and section 1.471 of the Revised Code and therefore take effect immediately when this act becomes law.

Section 9. The General Assembly, applying the principle stated in division (B) of section 1.52 of the Revised Code that amendments are to be harmonized if reasonably capable of simultaneous operation, finds that the following sections, presented in this act as composites of the sections as amended by the acts indicated, are the resulting versions of the sections in effect prior to the effective date of the sections as presented in this act:

Section 4123.52 of the Revised Code as amended by both H.B. 33 of the 135th General Assembly and H.B. 81 of the 133rd General Assembly.

Section 4123.57 of the Revised Code as amended by both H.B. 75 and H.B. 281 of the 134th General Assembly.