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The Honorable Tom Brinkman
Chair, House Insurance Committee
Ohio House of Representatives

Dear Chairman Brinkman and committee members,

The Ohio Association for Justice, the state bar association for trial attorneys whose membership includes those who represent injured workers, supports a portion of HB 269. However, we have major concerns with other areas of the bill and implore you to reconsider these sections.

Cutting PTD Benefits with the New Extended Benefits Proposal

- This proposal could complicate a worker's financial problems at a time when the worker has already suffered a life-altering injury. The last ten years of an employee's career should be spent preparing financially for retirement. Removing these benefits **could increase the financial burden on the state** in later years as these former employees enter retirement.
- PTD benefits don't just replace wages. They also compensate workers for shorter life expectancy. Taking these benefits away in the short-term will **lead to whole families that are supported by other government programs.**
- Removing these benefits won't cut costs. It will shuffle workers and their families to other **government-run assistance programs.**

Temporary Total Disability – Return to Work Plan

- Protecting an injured employee's right to work would be a large improvement over the current model. While there are statutory return-to-work plans, they haven't been effective. The **more people we put back to work, the more Ohioans will reap the economic benefit.**
- Encouraging employers to take back or hire previously injured workers ensures that we are **keeping people off of permanent disability and dependent on government dollars for the rest of their lives.**

Change BWC Name

- One way to reduce the economic impact to taxpayers is to not change the name of the Bureau of Workers' Compensation. The cost to change the name of the bureau would be significant to Ohioans and could potentially create confusion. **Smaller government is better government.**

- Some contend that the current name implies workers feel entitled to compensation, but claims filed have seen a sharp drop over the last 20 years, down 70% since 1996.

The OAJ appreciates this opportunity to offer comments on HB 269. At your request, we would be pleased to work with you and your members on legislation that helps achieve your overall goals instead of shuffling injured employees to other government handouts. It is our goal - like yours - to put Ohio back to work.

Respectfully submitted,



John Van Doorn