

WILLIE HOWARD'S Injured Worker Horror Story



“I lost my job, my car, my home and my family’s health insurance. I’ll never be able to do my job again.”

About Me: My name is Willie Howard. I’m 59 and I live in San Leandro, near Oakland. I’m a Viet Nam veteran, and spent 17 years in the active or reserved armed forces.

My Family: I’m married, and my wife, Marian, and I have a daughter, Princess, 14.

My Job and What Happened: I was a sheet metal worker for 33 years. I’m a member of Sheet Metal Workers Union Local 104. I worked bending and cutting metal and assembling ducts. I used tin snips, rotohammers and hand and power tools of the trade every day. In 2002, I went to the doctor because I have lost feeling in my hand, and couldn’t grip the tools or use them. I’d injured my right hand from constant use of these tools. I had surgery, but I still have no feeling in my hand. I pinch it as hard as I can and don’t feel a thing. I’m no longer able to do sheet metal work. The company said they had no work for me, so I had to retire.

What this has meant to my life: Before my work injury, I made good wages, and had union health benefits, retirement and vacation pay. I’ve lost my job, my car, my home and my health insurance, which also covered my wife and daughter. We used up our savings and had to declare bankruptcy.

How the Governor's Workers' Comp Law Affects Me

How Workers' Comp was supposed to help me: Workers’ compensation insurance was to provide medical care and compensation for my lost earnings and permanent disabilities. The \$740 monthly payment I receive doesn’t even cover my \$850 health insurance premium. It doesn’t provide enough money for basic necessities. This paltry compensation is an insult and runs out in a short time. What then?

www.VotersInjuredatWork.org

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