

Cap Insurance Rates NOT Injured Workers' Care

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GOVERNOR'S PROPOSAL WOULD HARM INJURED WORKERS Can't cut \$11 billion without cutting injured workers' benefits

SACRAMENTO, CA - Injured workers and their advocates today responded to Governor Schwarzenegger's proposal to cut \$11 billion from workers' compensation without taking away injured workers' core medical and disability benefits. "The governor's proposal adds insult to injury for workers injured on the job," said Art Azevedo, president of the California Applicants' Attorneys Association, whose members aid injured workers with their claims. "There is no way to cut \$11 billion without harming injured workers. This proposal tries to hide the real agenda of big insurance companies and corporations: to take benefits away from injured workers."

The advocates for injured workers said they look forward to seeing the governor's proposals in legislative form, and would consider each of them in terms of whether they help or harm injured workers. But many of the proposals were already rejected by the Legislature and cut injured workers' benefits.

Independent medical review – would add more bureaucracy to the system, and could mean that a worker's medical care is decided by some doctor in Connecticut who never even sees the injured worker.

"Objective" permanent disability standards – a code word for taking away compensation for the pain an injured worker suffers.

Group health care – would sentence injured workers to jump through hoops and fight HMOs for the care they deserve. "Injured workers give up their right to sue their employers in return for medical care to cure and relieve their on-the-job injuries, said Azevedo. "These proposals cut the heart out of the bargain made with injured workers that if they give up the right to sue, their injuries and disabilities will be taken care of. We ought not make those already suffering through no fault of their own suffer even further. That's what these proposals would do."

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