



Workers Injured at Work Justice Campaign

Goals -

- Create awareness about injured workers realities and stories
- Encourage injured workers to organize for increased rights and benefits
- Help inspire new groups to form in solidarity and support of increased injured worker rights
- Research funding opportunities to finance injured worker support groups
- To facilitate the development of a national/international network focused on injured worker's rights

Workers injured and made ill by their work have paid the ultimate price for the lack of safety on the job - they shouldn't have to suffer for the rest of their lives with insults and unfair treatment - they deserve respect and dignity.

Myth: Workers injured or made ill on the job get adequate lost wages and medical benefits from the Workers Compensation [WC] systems to be made whole and recover fully.

Reality: Many workers injured on the job end up in poverty, living in chronic pain, or experiencing family breakdown and depression, including suicides. WC systems have been corrupted by corporate lobbying and business political influences to minimize the costs to industry while cutting benefits to workers. Workers' benefits are often delayed by legal challenges while they have no other source of income to live. Injured workers often suffer a lifetime of loss and isolation fighting a system that tries to monitor, control and minimize their treatment and rehabilitation.

Myth: WC is an 'No fault' system that provides timely and fair compensation to workers who have been injured on the job.

Reality: The WC system is often used to limit what and how much workers can receive to compensate for traumatic loss of limb, illness or emotional stress. The bottom line is reducing the cost to employers, not providing justice, care and treatment for workers.

Myth: WC systems are 'non adversarial programs' that do not require injured workers to have legal representation so as to avoid attorneys and legal fees.

Reality: Many workers are told that they do not need to be represented by an attorney. While one of the goals in the Workers Compensation system was to avoid the adversarial nature of the courts, this has been undermined by the business practices over many years. Businesses and insurance companies are supported by legal and administrative resources to minimize and challenge claims. In order to counter business interests, workers are encouraged to seek legal advice to make sure they know their rights and are represented, when possible.

Myth: The coverage of medical benefits for work-related injuries is straightforward, comprehensive and just.

Reality: Nothing could be further from the truth. The WC system is full of contradictions and biased practices that result in poor treatment for injured workers and additional emotional trauma to people who are supposed to be helped and supported by the WC system.

Myth: The injustices of the WC system affects all workers equally.

Reality: Race, immigration status, class are just some of the factors that can work negatively against workers injured on the job trying to get fair treatment to deal with work trauma. This compounds the many barriers erected to stop workers accessing their rights and benefits.

Myth: The major cause of workplace injury and illness is worker errors, behaviors or other mistakes .

Reality: This outdated, unsupported "blame the worker" principle has pervaded our culture and stifled the safety field for more than a hundred years. Most if not all worker injury and illnesses are preventable by the implementation of effective health and safety programs funded by management. Worker injuries and illnesses are the result of a management failure to implement these safety system programs.

Worker Stories -

[US](#) - There are numerous stories of injured workers and their families suffering from the devastating aftermath of a workplace injury/illness and being abused by a worker

compensation system that amplifies the harm instead of providing relief, respect and rehabilitation.

Canada - ONIWG [Ontario Injured Worker Group] - Wes MacAuley was 26 years old, working as a highrise window cleaner in Hamilton in 1995. Then the safety clips on the old ladder broke, and he fell three floors, taking the full fall on his right foot. His life has never been the same. Read his wife's teeling of the story [here](#)

What can to be done:

Solutions - Justice and fair treatment of workers injured or made ill on the job

- **Adhere** to well established recommendations - [National Commission [\[US\]](#), PLATFORM FOR CHANGE [Canada](#), [International](#) Doctrines]
- **Funding** for Support groups - Many groups of injured workers and advocates are supporting each other and winning important rights.
- **Listening** to Workers regarding needs, demands and goals
- **Solidarity** from Unions, International trade union groups and other worker organizations
- **Organizing** injured worker caucuses or committees within unions, worker organizations and others to advance the support and rights of all workers injured on the job