

Michigan Chamber of Commerce Praises House, Senate and Governor for Reforming Workers' Compensation Law

LANSING, Mich., Dec. 19, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- The Michigan Chamber of Commerce today praised Rep. Bradford Jacobsen (R-Oxford), House and Senate lawmakers, and Gov. Rick Snyder for their hard work to implement much-needed reform in Michigan's Worker's Compensation system. This Chamber-backed legislation, signed by the governor today, addresses much needed systemic reforms and is a fair compromise bill, balancing the needs of injured workers and employers who finance the system.

"This law is a win for job providers and employees alike because it updates, reforms and modernizes Michigan's out-of-date workers' compensation law," said Wendy Block, Director of Health Policy & Human Resources for the Michigan Chamber. "House Bill 5002 provides statutory consistency and certainty regarding the payment of workers' compensation benefits, which will allow workers and job providers to avoid the need to spend time and money litigating ambiguities and common disputes."

The new law codifies case law creating clarity and stability in the system, including:

- Providing workers a roadmap to return to work post-injury.
- Strengthening work search requirements for individuals able to return to work.
- Clarifying "personal injury" to ensure that compensation is available to individuals with injuries that arise out of and in the course of employment and that pre-existing conditions not connected to employment are not compensable.
- Clarifying the compensability of mental disabilities when not caused by physical trauma.
- Establishing a clear delineation between total disability and partial disability.
- Acknowledging advancements in medical technology by allowing medial implants to be taken into account when evaluating the injury.

"By signing this legislation into law, Gov. Snyder took another step forward in Michigan's reinvention by placing Michigan on a competitive playing field with surrounding states," said Jim Holcomb, Senior Vice President, Business Advocacy & Associate General Counsel for the Michigan Chamber. "We commend Rep. Jacobsen for his leadership on this issue, as well as House Speaker Jase Bolger, Senate Majority Leader Randy Richardville and Gov. Snyder for their diligent work to implement this reform."

The Michigan Chamber of Commerce is a statewide business organization representing approximately 6,500 employers, trade associations and local chambers of commerce. The Michigan Chamber represents businesses of every size and type in all 83 counties of the state. Michigan Chamber member businesses provide jobs to 1.6 million residents. One of every 2.3 employees in Michigan works for a Chamber member firm. The Michigan Chamber was established in 1959 to be an advocate for Michigan's job providers in the legislative, political and legal process. It is one of only four state chambers of commerce in the nation accredited by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

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