

SAVE WORKERS' COMPENSATION!

June 2 was the so-called "cross-over deadline" in the North Carolina General Assembly. Any bill that did not contain a finance provision and that did not pass either the House or Senate generally will not be eligible for consideration this session.

The North Carolina State AFL-CIO has been following literally hundreds of bills this session, including ones on workers' compensation, unemployment, wage and hour, health and safety, consumer, tax, healthcare, education, and economic development.

As we predicted, a major "reform" bill in the area of workers' compensation was introduced by the employer community. SB 984 (Hoyle) was introduced with 20 sponsors (only 26 votes are needed to pass a measure). The bill, the top priority of the NC Citizens for Business and Industry (NCCBI), the State's Chamber of Commerce, would be, as has been reported, a disaster for workers. Just as a couple of examples, the bill would cut off benefits after 10 years and would cut off benefits whenever an employee is deemed able to return to any work whatsoever. The bill was met by what the chair of the Senate Commerce Committee described as an "uprising" of workers across the state. Calls to legislators have been overwhelmingly in opposition to the bill. You helped us get injured workers and union members to come to the legislature not once but on two different occasions when the bill was to be heard. The employer community floated a "substitute" proposal and has redoubled its efforts. The substitute proposal is in some ways worse than the original bill. Unable to secure the votes for passage in the Senate by the cross-over deadline, the bill's sponsors attached a finance provision so that it will remain eligible after the deadline; as a result this bill will be debated for a good while in the future. Also, a House companion bill to SB 984 -- actually the House bill is even worse than the Senate bill -- has been introduced by Rep. Gibson and has been referred to the Rules Committee where it presently sits. We appreciate all of your help so far but we need to keep up our pressure on these anti-worker bills.

Please call or contact your Senator, particularly if he or she is on the Senate Commerce Committee, and tell him or her to oppose the bill. The members of the Commerce Committee and their contact numbers are listed below. You may call the main legislative number, (919) 733-4111 and ask to be connected to other members of the General Assembly.

R.C. Soles (chair).....	733-5963	R. Stevens.....	733-5653
Dave D. Hoyle (vice-chair).....	733-5734	L. Shaw.....	733-9349
T. Rand (vice-chair).....	733-9892	W. Purcell.....	733-5953
P. Berger (ranking minority member)	733-5708	K. Presnell.....	733-3460
T. Apodaca.....	733-5745	M. Nesbitt.....	715-3001
D. Berger.....	715-8363	V. Malone.....	733-5880
H. Blake.....	733-4809	J. Kerr.....	733-5621
J. Boseman.....	715-2525	J. Jacumin.....	715-7823
W. Dalton.....	715-3038	M. Graham.....	733-5650
K. Dorsett.....	715-3042	E. Goodall.....	733-7659
J. Forester.....	715-3050	L. Garrou.....	733-5620