



California Labor Federation | AFL - CIO

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Gov. Schwarzenegger Proposes Cuts to Payments for Disabled Workers Over Christmas Weekend

Governor Schwarzenegger launched another attack on workers today, right on the heels of an attempt to do away with their right to a lunch break. Just in time for Christmas, the Governor proposed new emergency regulations that would cut compensation for disabled workers.

As with the Governor's recent proposal to change lunch break rules, there will only be five (5) calendar days for public comment before the Office of Administrative Law makes a decision on them.

"Governor Schwarzenegger is making these cuts at a time when most people will not be paying attention," said Art Pulaski, Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the California Labor Federation. "Injured workers deserve better than a weekend attack like this. If the Governor is going to make drastic cuts in their payments, he should at least give them a chance to respond."

Earlier this year the Legislature passed SB 899 to overhaul the workers' comp system. The bill required the Schwarzenegger Administration to tie permanent disability benefits to data on the loss of wages suffered by workers with different injuries. This would have guaranteed that workers were fairly compensated for their injuries based on the amount of wages they lose.

Instead, Gov. Schwarzenegger has created a new Permanent Disability Rating System that is estimated to cut Permanent Disability compensation in half. Many injured workers will get fewer benefits; other injuries will no longer be compensated by workers' compensation.

Legislative leadership asked Governor Schwarzenegger to delay the implementation of these new rules so that the wage loss data can be incorporated. The Governor refused their request and instead is pushing his rules through the emergency regulatory process.

"Governor Schwarzenegger made a promise to injured workers that they wouldn't suffer as a result of workers' compensation reform. Now he is slashing benefits in half for workers on permanent disability," said Pulaski. "Working people are learning that this Governor is not a man of his word. He will break any promise he makes, and he will wait until they're not watching to do it."

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