
Taking ACTION

Legislative Committee Newsletter of Affiliated Construction Trades Foundation

Vol. 1, No. 2



January 1996

Legislative Session to Open January 10th

Jobs Act Top Priority

The passage of the West Virginia Jobs Act will be one of ACT's top priorities in the 1996 legislature. The Jobs Act would require the hiring of local workers for any project with costs over \$25,000 which receive any type of public funding or support.

"The Jobs Act will help guarantee that state tax dollars are not being used to hire workers who don't live in the area," said ACT Legislative Representative BB Smith.

"When the state spends

money on a project, directly or through tax credits, we shouldn't be seeing workers imported from Texas, Tennessee or North Carolina. That defeats the purpose of the state's economic development activity."

The Jobs Act was introduced last year but failed to pass in either chamber. This year may be a very different story due to local organizing efforts and the legislators facing re-election.

ACT has taken a resolution supporting the hiring of local work-

ers to a number of County Commissions -- twenty-six have passed the resolution.

"It is extremely important we let legislators know how important this issue is," Smith said, "and that it is one which will be looked at when our members go to the polls later this year."

ACT members are strongly encouraged to contact their legislators and urge their support and co-sponsorship of the West Virginia Jobs Act in the 1996 Legislative session.

Workers Comp: Legislature Must Undo the Damage

In the 1995 session of the West Virginia Legislature rights and benefits previously guaranteed to working people under Workers Compensation were eliminated. The so-called "reform" legislation was aimed at the most vulnerable, those with serious injuries and widows, while ignoring the fact of corporations owing hundreds of millions of dollars in back workers compensation premiums.

Key provisions of last years damaging legislation are:

Formerly disability compensation was decided by the extent of the injury, the type of work

the injured worker did, their education and ability to be retrained. Under the new legislation the amount of compensation is determined solely on the basis of the injury.

Benefits for surviving spouses of workers on total permanent disability were totally eliminated.

The new law reduces the time given to file a Workers Compensation claim from two years to six months. In addition, medical benefits will be terminated after five years if the injured worker has not required significant medical

treatment.

Workers Compensation payments now ends when often much lower Social Security payments begin.

Employers can now choose the physician for an injured worker and have near total access to their medical records.

Now is the time to for the Legislature to reform the "reforms" of last year. The security of West Virginia's workers depends on it. Contact your representatives and ask them to undo the damage done by last year's Workers Compensation legislation *now*.

Sample Letter to Legislator: Workers Compensation

The Honorable Joe Q. Sample
West Virginia House of Delegates
State Capitol
Charleston, West Virginia 25305

Dear Delegate Sample:

Last year the legislature enacted Workers Compensation "reforms" which greatly damaged the security of West Virginia's working families. This legislation was done with great haste and with no regard for the hundreds of millions of dollars owed in Workers Comp premiums by corporations.

I strongly urge you to take swift action this year to restore the rights of workers taken away by the mean spirited legislation passed last year. The slashing of benefits and "technical" changes made threaten every working family in West Virginia.

Please contact me regarding the actions you plan to take on this crucial issue.

Sincerely,

John Jones

ACT Constitutional Convention Lobby Day and Legislative Reception

January 31, 1996
Charleston House Holiday Inn

Convention
10:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.

Lobby Legislature
Statehouse
2:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M.

Legislative Reception
"Windows on the River"
5:00 - 8:00 P.M.

For additional
information contact:
(304)345-7570



Stay in Contact With Your Legislators During the Session

Keeping in contact with your elected officials during the legislative session is the best way to help in the efforts to protect the rights of all of us.

Call or write your Delegates and Senators often -- even if just to express a general concern about an issue -- and ask for them to respond back to you.

When possible mention a particular bill or piece of legislation and what action you wish them to take.

During the session, legislators may be contacted by writing:

Senate:

The Honorable _____
West Virginia Senate
State Capitol
Charleston, WV 25305

Dear Senator _____,

House of Delegates:

The Honorable _____
West Virginia House of Delegates
State Capitol
Charleston, WV 25305

Dear Delegate _____,

Legislators may be contacted by phone by calling toll-free:

1-800-624-8650

This number can also be used to request other Legislative information.