

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Keep Florida's Workers' Comp Working



Florida CFO Jeff Atwater addresses the need for Florida small businesses to have a fair and stable workers' comp solution at the Florida Chamber's annual Insurance Summit.

Why It Matters to Florida

Florida's business climate is in jeopardy due to recent Florida Supreme Court decisions in 2016 that declared portions of Florida's workers' comp system unconstitutional. The result was a \$1.5 billion increase in workers' compensation rates for Florida's job creators. This significant increase could mean the difference between hiring a new employee, increasing employee benefits, or paying higher workers' comp premiums. Business growth requires workers' compensation premiums to be fair and not inflated by unnecessary costs, and an improved business climate overall will allow Floridians to get back to work and reduce the cost of living for families and small businesses.

Florida's Competitiveness Agenda

Keeping our workers' comp system fair and not inflated by trial lawyer tactics and other unnecessary costs will help lower the cost of doing business in Florida. The Florida Chamber has a long history of helping to keep Florida's workers' comp system working. As a result, workers' comp rates were lowered by more than 60 percent in the last 13 years, and injured workers returned to work 10 days faster.

Workers' comp rates are now spiraling in the wrong direction, due to cases ruled by the Florida Supreme Court (*Castellanos v. Next Door Company* and *Westphal v. City of St. Petersburg*). The *Castellanos* case threw out the current cap on attorneys' fees and, in this particular instance, the attorney was seeking \$38,000 in fees for securing \$800 in benefits for the injured worker.

Plaintiff attorney maneuvers like we're seeing with workers' compensation are reflective of a larger lawsuit abuse problem in Florida. In fact, a national survey released shows Florida's lawsuit climate worsening – ranking at an all-time low 44 out of 50 states, or in the bottom 10. And that's important, because 75 percent of companies surveyed say a state's lawsuit environment is likely to impact important business decisions at their company, such as where to locate or whether or not to expand.

The Fight for Free Enterprise Continues

With rates going up significantly, the Florida Chamber is leading the effort to reform workers' comp. To secure Florida's future, we must keep Florida's workers' comp system working.

ACT NOW:

How are increased workers' comp rates impacting your business? Let us know by contacting Carolyn Johnson at cjohnson@flchamber.com.



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GET INVOLVED:

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SECURING FLORIDA'S FUTURE