

RICOSH memo

Safe Jobs: Every Workers Right

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Each year Workers Memorial Day events are held around the country in the last week of April to call attention to the terrible toll taken by unhealthy and unsafe working conditions. Every week nearly 70 US workers die from injuries sustained at work, and *each day* another 150 die from work-related diseases like mesothelioma, black lung, silicosis, and beryllium disease due to workplace exposures. Here in RI a workers memorial event 'Safe Jobs Every Workers Right' on April 27th in Pawtucket will remember and honor these workers

While Workers Memorial events highlight hazard and dangers at work it is also an event focused on new directions to improve job safety and Health and prevent injury and illness at work. --Safe Jobs Every Workers Right--

Protecting America's Workers Act (PAWA)

A major step forward is the introduction of **Protecting America's Workers Act (PAWA)** H.R.1074 by Congressman Joe Courtney (D-CT). Rep Courtney introduced the bill with over two dozen cosponsors on the anniversary of the 2010 Kleen Energy power plant explosion that killed 6 workers and injured another 50 others with explaining why OSHA reform was necessary:- , *'It is appropriate that my colleagues and I reintroduce this legislation to make critical, decades-overdue updates to OSHA The OSHA Act made great strides in protecting American workers, but since it was enacted the American workplace has modernized and diversified. The law should keep up with the realities that workers face on the job today. Our bill is focused on updates and compliance, not on petty, punitive measures against employers, and will ensure that today's workforce is empowered and protected by our nation's chief worker safety law.'*

PAWA amends the Occupational Safety and Health Act to expand coverage to public sector workers, to expand worker rights following OSHA citations, to increase protections for whistleblowers, to increase penalties for high gravity violations, to adjust penalties for inflation, to provide rights for victim family members during OSHA investigations of worksite fatalities.

Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act

Another major improvement is the would be the passage of the *Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act* (H.R. 1309). Incidents of violence against health care and social service workers is on the rise. 2016 GAO study reported that rates of violence against health care workers are up to 12 times higher than rates for the overall workforce, and 70% of nonfatal workplace assaults in 2016 occurred in the health care and social assistance sectors. Recently released data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics found a sharp increase in serious injuries as a result of workplace violence among health care workers last year. Front line employees in these settings interact with a range of patients, clients, and their families, often with little training or direction for how to prevent or handle interactions that become violent. The *Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act* (H.R. 1309) is co-sponsored by Congressman Robert C. “Bobby” Scott (VA-03), Chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee, Congresswoman Alma Adams (NC-12), Chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Workforce Protections, as well as by 24 other Members of Congress. The bill directs the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to issue a standard requiring health care and social service employers to write and implement a workplace violence prevention plan to prevent and protect employees from violent incidents in the workplace.

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