

HCS HB 2375 -- WORKERS' COMPENSATION

SPONSOR: Christ

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Insurance by a vote of 10 to 1. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules-Legislative by a vote of 8 to 2.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 2375.

Under current law, an injury is compensable if the accident was the prevailing factor in causing both the resulting medical condition and disability. This bill provides that the injury is compensable if the accident was the prevailing factor in causing the injury, the resulting medical condition, the disability, and the need for treatment. The bill modifies the definition of injury due to an occupational disease; injury due to repetitive motion; and the "prevailing factor" definition.

In addition, for an employee to receive medical treatment, the accident or occupational disease must be the prevailing factor in causing the injury, the resulting medical condition and the need for treatment.

This bill provides that any savings from benefits from the employer or the employer's insurance for liability, and any savings or payments through insurance procured or provided by the employer, will be applied when determining the compensation due and will be deducted from the compensation otherwise due under these provisions. The amount deducted from compensation otherwise due resulting from payments or benefits from an insurance policy will be limited to the portion of such savings equal to the employer's pro rata share of the premium or expense for such policy.

This bill requires administrative law judges (ALJ) or the Labor and Industrial Relations Commission (LIRC) to have the authority to order employers to make payments only to the medical provider or providers to whom bills are due in cases where they determine the employer is responsible for disputed medical bills.

The bill authorizes an employer to file a motion to dismiss a claim for compensation within 180 days of filing a claim, if the Division of Workers' Compensation has not already set the matter for a prehearing conference, mediation conference, or hearing. The employer can file a motion to dismiss the claim, raising one

or more grounds provided in the bill. The bill outlines the evidence to be submitted by the parties relating to the issues to be determined at the evidentiary hearing and the timeline for an ALJ to issue an order which is subject to review by the LIRC. The employer can file the motion to dismiss to specifically raise one or more of the following arguments:

(1) That the employee did not notify the employer in a timely manner or file the claim in a timely manner;

(2) That the employee was not performing work for the employer at the time when the alleged injury occurred;

(3) That the employer is not liable due to the employee's intoxication from use of alcohol or controlled substances; or

(4) That the claimant was not employed by the employer when the alleged incident occurred.

Under current law, a temporary or partial award of compensation can be modified and kept open until a final award can be issued and if the temporary or partial award is not complied with, the compensation amount awarded and unpaid can be doubled in the final award. This bill repeals this penalty language and specifies that the temporary or partial award is subject to review and appeal after the date of the final award.

This bill is similar to HCS HB 497 (2025).

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that this provides important clarifications to Missouri's workers' compensation system, ensuring greater consistency in how claims and related medical treatments are evaluated. This would help ensure that Missouri's workers' compensation system remains fair and predictable while preventing unnecessary claims that drive up costs for employers.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Christ; Missouri Retailers Association; Missouri Grocers Association; Missouri Association of Counties/MAC Trust; National Association Of Mutual Insurance Companies (NAMIC); Missouri Insurance Coalition; American Property Casualty Insurance Association; MO

Chamber of Commerce; Stephen Rehagen, Missouri Automobile Dealers Association; and Associated Industries Of Missouri.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that this unfairly favors employers and insurance companies. This is a way for insurance companies to deny a claim that should be paid. The bill would put more of a burden of proof on someone who is injured at work and needs to have his or her medical bills paid.

Testifying in person against the bill were Missouri Association Of Trial Attorneys; and Arnie C. Ac Dienoff.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony and witnesses testifying online can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.