



Insurance & Real Estate and Labor & Public Employees Committees

Informational Hearing on Workers Compensation and Covid-19

June 17, 2020

Good afternoon co-chairs and members of the Insurance & Real Estate and Labor & Public Employees committee. My name is Virginia Ligi and I work as a Correctional Officer at Cheshire Correctional Institution. I am an essential worker on the front lines. As a Correctional Officer, I'm in close contact with inmates and staff routinely which increases our risk to contract COVID-19. This is worsened by a shortage of staff and safety equipment to handle a pandemic.

We know that the risk is real because we have seen over 1000 inmates and staff test positive for COVID-19 since the pandemic began. I have been among the staff that have tested positive for COVID-19.

I was bed-ridden for 3 weeks with difficulty breathing and a seemingly endless case of vertigo. My husband and I also have three young children which made being bed-ridden even more difficult for me and my family. Additionally, I had to use an extra week of my own time before I was able to return to work due to how sick I was due to COVID-19.

Every Correctional Officer on the front lines faces the same risk that I did every day. After doing our duty, if and when we get COVID-19 we face additional challenges by having our workers compensation denied. CO's know that when we file a claim that it will most likely be denied as they routinely are.

In my case, I didn't even get the courtesy of a denial. Instead of getting an answer I was left in the dark without a formal response to my claim in writing.

COVID-19 remains a threat to frontline workers and we need to establish a workers compensation presumption for essential workers. I urge both committees to address this issue and help our frontline workers.