

Employers Agree: Lawsuit Changes Hurt Wisconsin

Wisconsin Industries Employing Nearly 2 Million Workers Speak Out

The full spectrum of Wisconsin employers came together in Madison to speak out against lawsuit changes that threaten Wisconsin jobs businesses, farms and families.

“We’ve come together to oppose lawsuit changes that will hurt every industry in Wisconsin but the Trial Lawyers,” said Jim Engel, owner of Sunburst Ski Area in Kewaskum. “We have CPA’s and farmers, manufacturers and tourism attractions all telling how these changes to liability law will harm their industry.”

“We have over 50 organizations and businesses from across Wisconsin speaking out for practically every industry in our state,” said Ed Lump of the Wisconsin Restaurant Association. “If the other side got together, you’d see Trial Lawyers representing Trial Lawyers.”

Opposition to provisions buried in the state budget that would increase the number of lawsuits and the number of parties sued in each lawsuit brought the groups together.

One provision, called joint and several liability, would allow a party only 1% at fault to be forced to pay 100% of the damages in a lawsuit. Another provision would allow the person most at fault in an accident to collect from the person least at fault. A third provision would instruct the jury on how to twist the system to get more money from so-called ‘deep-pockets,’ parties with insurance, money, a home or a business.

“It is fair to hold me responsible for my actions,” said Abe Degnan, President of Degnan Design Builders. “It is unfair to make me pay for someone else’s fault, especially if that person is most responsible for the accident.”

“These provisions are unfair and costly,” added Doctor Tom Luetzow. “If this becomes law, a lot more people will be sued and everyone will pay more for insurance.”

“There couldn’t be a worse time to increase the risk and cost of having a business in Wisconsin,” said Tom Thorstad of Thorstad Chevrolet.

Among the industries represented were: health care, manufacturing, construction, retail stores, restaurants, farmers, tourism businesses, transportation, insurance, energy and financial services.

A complete list of attendees is attached.

For more information contact: Andrew Cook

Agriculture- 420,000 employees

Midwest Food Processors Association, Inc.
Wisconsin Farmers Union
Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation
Wisconsin Agribusiness Council

Business and Manufacturing- 503,588 employees

National Federation of Independent Business
Alliance of Wisconsin Retailers
Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce
Tavern League of Wisconsin
Wisconsin Petroleum Marketers & Convenience Store Association
Wisconsin Motor Carriers Association
Wisconsin Institute of Certified Public Accountants
Wisconsin Grocers Association
Wisconsin Paper Council
Wisconsin Cast Metals Association
Wisconsin Economic Development Association
Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce
Independent Business Association
Wisconsin Retail Council

Transportation- 87,628 employees

Wisconsin Automobile & Truck Dealers Association, Inc.
BNSF Railway
Canadian National
Canadian Pacific
Union Pacific
Wisconsin & Southern Railroad Co.
Wisconsin Car Rental Alliance

Insurance-134, 307 employees

Wisconsin Insurance Alliance
Wisconsin Association of Mutual Insurance Companies
Community Insurance Corporation
Professional Insurance Agents of Wisconsin

Health Care- 336,466 employees

Wisconsin Hospital Association
Wisconsin Medical Society
Marshfield Clinic
Delta Dental Plan of Wisconsin, Inc.

Energy- 26,536 employees

Electric Cooperatives
American Petroleum Institute

Tourism Industry- 200,748 employees

Wisconsin Restaurant Association

Wisconsin Tourism Federation

Association of Wisconsin Tourism Attractions

Wisconsin Association of Convention and Visitors Bureau

Wisconsin Innkeepers Association

Wisconsin Ski Industries Association

Construction and Housing -142,240 employees

Associated Builders & Contractors of Wisconsin

Midwest Equipment Dealers Association

Wisconsin Builders Association

Associated General Contractors of Wisconsin, Inc.

Aggregate Producers of Wisconsin

Wisconsin Realtors Association

Associated General Contractors-Greater Milwaukee

Mechanical Contractors Association of Wisconsin

Wisconsin Underground Contractors Association

American Council of Engineering Companies of Wisconsin

Local Government

Wisconsin Counties Association

Wisconsin Towns Association