



Compensation System Termed Completely Dysfunctional

Workers' Compensation

The NJ Star-Ledger newspaper conducted an eight-month survey involving hundreds of thousands of workers compensation claims pending before the New Jersey Division of Workers Compensation. The Star Ledger series ran for three days and exposed huge difficulties in the NJ workers' compensation system.

THE STAR-LEDGER NEWSPAPER

The Newark Star-Ledger is a daily newspaper based in Newark, New Jersey, with a long investigative reporting history. Founded in 1832 as the Newark Daily Advertiser, the newspaper has evolved over the years and has consistently been at the forefront of uncovering corruption and wrongdoing in New Jersey.

One of the most notable examples of Star-Ledger's investigative reporting occurred in the 1970s when the newspaper exposed corruption within the Newark Police Department. In 1972, the newspaper began publishing articles detailing corruption and abuse of power within the department, including evidence of bribery, extortion, and illegal wiretapping. The series of articles, later collected and published as a book called "The State of Blood," won a Pulitzer Prize and led to significant reforms within the Newark Police Department.

In recent years, Star-Ledger has continued its tradition of investigative reporting with several notable stories. In 2010, the newspaper published a series of articles exposing corruption within the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, resulting in several top officials' resignations and the implementation of significant reforms. In 2013, the Star-Ledger published an investigation into the use of eminent domain by the city of Newark, which led to several lawsuits and new policies to protect property owners.

In addition to its investigative reporting, Star-Ledger is known for its coverage of local news and events in the Newark area. The newspaper has a dedicated reporters team that covers a wide range of topics, including politics, crime, education, and sports. The newspaper's website, NJ.com, is also a popular destination for news and information about the state of New Jersey.

Overall, the Newark Star-Ledger has a long and distinguished history of investigative journalism and has played a significant role in holding powerful institutions and individuals accountable for their actions. Its commitment to uncovering the truth and promoting transparency and accountability has made it an essential source of news and information for Newark and beyond.

FLAWS

The flaws in the \$1.8 billion system include the following:

- -Frequent delays for claimants who can least afford them: disabled workers with mounting medical needs, no income or insurance. In its review of the court dockets, The Star-Ledger found that hearings were rescheduled more than a dozen times on average.
- -Inexperienced judges who, once on the bench, need more substantial power to enforce their orders. The main qualification for some is friends in high places.
- -A Legislature where some of the same lawmakers approve comp judges and decide which

workers' benefits bills are considered to belong to law firms that earn big money in compensation cases.

- -A workers' compensation administration that does a woeful job of tracking its performance. New Jersey officials acknowledged they could not identify the outcome in more than 10,000 of the most complex cases in the past seven
- years.
- -More than almost any state, New Jersey lets insurers dictate where, when, and for how long injured workers get treated. There are no alternative forms of resolution, no incentives to resolve a claim quickly, and weak sanctions against companies slow to act.

OVERHAUL

Senate Majority Leader Stephen Sweeney (D-Gloucester) vowed Wednesday to overhaul the state's "completely dysfunctional" workers' compensation system. "To fix the \$1.8 billion-a-year system," Sweeney said, "You've got to go back and completely take it apart and put it back together again, so it benefits employers and employees." (Star-Ledger April 9, 2008)

In an editorial, the Star Ledger demanded an "overhaul" of the entire NJ Workers' Compensation system:

New Jersey's nearly 100-year-old workers' compensation system desperately needs an overhaul. The picture in "comp court" can verge on the Dickensian: Thousands of cases become bogged down for years, delaying much-needed payments to workers with the most severe injuries or disabilities. Compensation court judgeships are often treated as patronage plums with skill and expertise taking a back seat to political connections.

The insurance companies have responded by requesting a more detailed analysis of the present system.

Star-Ledger Series:

http://blog.nj.com/ledgerarchives/2008/04/workers_compensation.html

.....

The author, [Jon L. Gelman](#), practices law in Wayne, NJ. He is the author of [NJ Workers' Compensation Law](#) (Thomson-Reuters) and co-author of the national treatise [Modern Workers' Compensation Law](#) (Thomson-Reuters). For over five decades, the [Law Offices of Jon L Gelman](#) 1.973.696.7900 jon@gelmans.com have represented injured workers and their families who have suffered [occupational accidents and illnesses](#).

Recommended Citation: Gelman, Jon L., Compensation System Termed Completely Dysfunctional, www.gelmans.com (2008),

<https://www.gelmans.com/ReadingRoom/tabid/65/ArtMID/1482/ArticleID/56/preview/true/Default.aspx>

© 2001-2023 Jon L Gelman. All rights reserved.

Attorney Advertising

Prior results do not guarantee a similar outcome.

[Disclaimer](#)

[Download Adobe Reader](#)

Tags: [NJ workers' compensation](#) [Reform](#) [Disability](#) [Backlog](#)

