



**MICHIGAN
CHAMBER**
of Commerce

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MEMORANDUM

To: Members Senate Economic Development Committee
From: Wendy Block, Michigan Chamber of Commerce
Date: April 25, 2012
Re: Chamber Opposes Government Mandated Worker's Compensation Benefits

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform you of the Michigan Chamber's opposition to Senate Bill 94. While the Michigan Chamber fully supports the brave work of firefighters and recognize the risks they undertake each and every day, we are opposed to SB 94 because we believe worker's compensation benefit determinations should be made on a case-by-case basis, not by state or federal mandates.

Senate Bill 94 would erode a basic principle of the worker's compensation system: that eligibility should be based on injuries that result out of and in the course of employment. Instead, the legislation would create a preference for a class of employees and shift the burden of proof to the employer. As a result, this legislation would allow firefighters to claim they contracted cancer from exposure to fumes while fighting fires, but without actually having to prove the cancer was in fact caused by those fires or their work. This is further limited by the language that prohibits the use of "evidence that the condition was pre-existing."

Senate Bill 94 would increase worker's compensation rates for many local units of government at a time when we should be doing everything we can to help them manage their costs. Furthermore, it would set a dangerous precedent for other high-risk or high-stress professions where employees also believe a presumption is warranted.

We respectfully urge a "no" vote on SB 94. Feel free to contact me at 517/371.7678 if you have any questions.