TRUX UNLIMITED

WORKERS COMPENSATION SENATE BILL 167

PRESENTED TO SENATE COMMERCE COMMITTEE

FEB. 18, 2015

My name is Mark Fronce and my wife Karen owns, and I operate, Boulevard Auto Truck Repair located at 1020 SW Blvd in Kansas City, Kansas. We are also a licensed Goodyear Tire dealer. We have been in business for over 12 years and employ 16 people. It was brought to our attention that there has been some recent changes to the Kansas Workers Compensation laws. My understanding is that workers benefits have been drastically reduced. Although that may result in some slight reduction in our workers compensation premium, I also hear that this reduction in benefits is so significant that the validity of the entire system is in question. Attorneys, law professors and even our own Secretary of State claims that the Kansas Workers Compensation Act will no longer be constitutional. If that occurs then our business will be at risk for law suits in civil court and that is a risk our small business just cannot afford to take.

We have always maintained workers compensation coverage and that has remained reasonable and has protected our business when we had claims filed and has allowed our employees to be treated fairly. We easily budget for our premium and appreciate the protection that gives us by protecting us from higher valued civil law suits. Although we take every precaution to provide a safe working environment an automotive shop is a hazardous place. Accidents are going to happen and if one of those occurs now because of our unintended fault or a co-employee's fault, and we have to defend that in civil court and potentially pay out a much larger amount, it will bankrupt our small business. With the current stability of the workers compensation system, how can anyone think that taking such a risk is good for us business owners? Senate Bill 167 is the right thing to do to avoid putting business owners like us at such a terrible risk!

I have been told that the Chamber of Commerce is opposed to SB 167. Well, we are current members of the Chamber of Commerce and they never informed us of this potentially devastating possibility and the

Chamber is certainly not speaking on our behalf if they are opposing SB 167. I have spoken to many other business owners here in our area, all of which are members of the Chamber and they all agree with us that this is a risk they cannot afford to take either! Like us, these other small business strongly disagree with the Chamber and want me to express that the Chamber is not speaking for us today. In fact, we are so upset with the Chambers willingness to put our business at risk that we will never renew our membership with that organization ever again!

Lastly, even if the new reductions can be done, why would we do that? We employee many family members and do care about the wellbeing of our other employees. Why would we want to so drastically cut benefits in a system that currently barely provides enough compensation to cover wages while an injured worker is recovering? If my daughter, who works in our shop, is significantly injured here, we want her, along with all of our employees to be treated fairly.

Please, know the Chamber does not speak for us business owners today. Please listen to those that have a solution to this potentially devastation problem and pass SB 167.

Respectfully,

Mark Fronce