



Legislation Text

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Stokes

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning **Informational Hearing - Baltimore City Workers' Compensation Claims**

FOR the purpose of requesting the Risk Management Officer of the Office of Risk Management & Division of Safety to participate in a hearing to provide information about the number of payouts to City employees for workers' compensation claims during the past 3 years, the types of claims filed, the contracts with private vendors to handle the compensation claims and health services for City employees, how the Office assists with the adjudication of workers' compensation and job-related injury claims, and how this information could be made more accessible to the general public.

On November 20, 2012, the Baltimore Sun published an article, the headline of which was entitled "Baltimore City leads the state in awarding workman's compensation." The article contended that, according to a new book of workers' compensation data called "The Comp Pinkbook", created by Byron B. Warnken, Baltimore City leads the State in the number of payouts for workers' compensation claims. Between January 2011 and June 2012, Baltimore awarded 2,173 payouts to workers for a total of \$28,000,000, and the average award for the City was \$12,800. The most frequent injuries claimed were back problems.

Byron Warnken created the Comp Pinkbook by using a computer program to scrape public data from the Maryland Workers' Compensation Commission's database. His work showed the following information in the public sector:

- Baltimore City paid out 2,173 claims for \$28 million.
- The State of Maryland paid out 1,823 claims for \$28.8 million.
- Prince George's County paid out 1,019 claims for \$15.1 million.
- Montgomery County paid out 812 claims for \$10.8 million.
- The Maryland Transit Administration paid out 437 claims for \$5 million.

In the private sector, information about the top private employers is as follows:

- Giant Food paid out 384 claims for \$8 million.

- Walmart paid out 148 claims for \$2.1 million.

- Verizon paid out 101 claims for \$2.1 million.

If the information in the Comp Pinkbook is correct, in these times that are so financially difficult for the City, \$28 million is a lot of money to pay out for Workers' Compensation claims in an 18-month period. We need to better understand why this has happened and what can be done to help ameliorate this situation in the future.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That this Body requests the Risk Management Officer of the Office of Risk Management & Division of Safety to participate in a hearing to provide information about the number of payouts to City employees for workers' compensation claims during the past 3 years, the types of claims filed, the contracts with private vendors to handle the compensation claims and health services for City employees, how the Office assists with the adjudication of workers' compensation and job-related injury claims, and how this information could be made more accessible to the general public.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Risk Management Officer of the Office of Risk Management & Division of Safety, the Director of Finance, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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