



Workers' Injury Law & Advocacy Group®

Workers' Injury Law & Advocacy Group® is the national non-profit membership organization dedicated to representing the interests of millions of workers and their families who, each year, suffer the consequences of workplace injuries and illnesses. The group acts principally to assist attorneys and non-profit groups in advocating the rights of injured workers through education, communication, research, and information gathering. WILG® is a network of like-minded advocates for workers' rights, sharing information and knowledge, a sense of commitment and kinship, and networking to help each other and our clients.

March 18, 2026

The Honorable Ryan Mackenzie
Chairman
Subcommittee on Workforce Protections
House Committee on Education and the Workforce
2176 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Ilhan Omar
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Workforce Protections
House Committee on Education and the Workforce
2176 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Mackenzie and Ranking Member Omar:

We are writing to you on behalf of the Workers' Injury Law and Advocacy Group ("WILG") in regards to your upcoming hearing entitled: "Strengthening Federal Workers' Compensation Programs: Ensuring Integrity, Efficiency, and Access." WILG is a national non-profit membership organization dedicated to representing the interests of millions of workers and their families who, each year, suffer the consequences of workplace injuries and illnesses. We urge the Committee to focus on prioritizing worker health and wellbeing and not on cutting life-saving benefits. More specifically, we hope the Committee will work on addressing the many unnecessary delays federal workers are subject to when trying to receive care for a work-related injury.

The Federal Employees' Compensation Program (FECP) is a program managed by the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP) within the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). Its

purpose is to provide wage replacement, medical treatment, vocational rehabilitation, and other benefits to federal civilian employees who suffer job-related injuries or occupational illnesses under the Federal Employee Compensation Act (FECA). FECA covers almost 3 million federal employees from over 70 agencies. Federal employees serve a wide range of job functions including several dangerous jobs such as construction, firefighting, law enforcement and emergency services. Workers' compensation is crucial for employees because it provides vital financial and medical support in the event of a work-related injury or illness. It may also include rehabilitation services and death benefits.

Currently, injured workers are waiting months— sometimes longer— just for an initial decision about their injury. Critical benefit determinations are regularly languishing in administrative purgatory. This is hands-down the biggest issue with the program. The OWCP is already burdened with a heavy caseload and has been further strained by staffing cuts. Moreover, it is generally acknowledged that there are not enough doctors willing to work with the FECA program and injured workers sometimes must travel across states to see a FECA-eligible doctor. A bi-partisan, common-sense way to bring more efficiency and badly needed care to the FECA program is to enact the Improving Access to Workers' Compensation for Injured Federal Workers' Act. The Act, which already passed the House twice, expands the definition of "qualified physician" under the FECA to include nurse practitioners and physician assistants. This change will make medical care easier and bring down healthcare costs by expanding the pool of eligible healthcare providers that can treat FECA patients, thereby allowing them to return to work more quickly.

However, more changes are necessary to address the lengthy delays. Congress should also consider permitting FECA claimants to obtain medical treatment through their Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) insurance coverage when delays occur in workers' compensation authorization. In most cases, FECA claimants are already covered by FEHB insurance networks. Allowing such temporary access to care would ensure that injured workers are not forced into lengthy treatment delays. Further, prompt treatment typically reduces the duration of an injury and improves recovery outcomes. Reduced injury time benefits both the federal government and the worker.

We also believe that Congress should streamline the offset process between FECA and the Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS) by directing OWCP by mandating use of an automated calculation system. That system should include mandatory data sharing from both the Treasury Department and the Social Security Administration. This long overdue automation would prevent overpayments and would protect FECA beneficiaries from unexpected debt assessments.

We also urge using extreme caution around shifting OWCP to be more reliant on so-called “managed care” solutions. Managed care providers frequently try and reduce costs by delaying or denying treatment. They also eliminate the ability of injured workers to select their own providers which introduces skepticism and mistrust into the system.

Federal employees work hard— many at jobs that are responsible for protecting the American public and, as a result, are entitled to benefits if and when they get hurt. We urge to the Committee to focus on thoughtful changes that would streamline these workers receiving care.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D P. NOMBERG". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

David P. Nomberg
President,
Workers Injury Law & Advocacy Group