



MARYLAND STATE AND D.C. AFL-CIO

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Mr. Warren Smith,
Secretary-Treasurer, Ohio AFL-CIO
President, WISH
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Mr. Warren:

I recently heard about the WISH project on Worker's Compensation, and am very interested to learn whether Maryland could become one of the target states for the training program.

From what I can tell, we would be an ideal candidate for such a program. Maryland is a heavily industrialized state, particularly the area in and around Baltimore. We have not only the Bethlehem Steel mills at Sparrows Point employing about 18,000 workers, but many smaller steel companies as well as a large chemical industry, several shipyards, a large CM assembly plant, etc.

Our workers' compensation law, like that in many other states, makes it very difficult for a worker with an occupational disease to win a claim. Out of the 159 claims for which decisions were made in 1980, 50% were denied dismisses or deferred. Despite the presence of several large shipbuilding and repair yards in Baltimore, only 54 claims were filed last year for asbestosis out of about 500 total claims. Four of these have been awarded so far.

Clearly, there are two aspects to the problem. One is that workers aren't filing for occupational disease. Either they don't know they are eligible or they get discouraged by the system with its delays, litigation, and often defeat. Those that do file, especially for chronic diseases, frequently lose.

We think this situation could be improved if workers knew their rights and knew what kind of expertise they needed to win a claim. A training program such as you are planning to develop would greatly assist us. We already have good contacts with technical people to help in such a project. These include the Workers' Clinic at Baltimore City Hospitals and the Maryland Committee on Occupational Safety and Health (MaryCOSH), an organization of labor unions, health and legal professionals who do educational and service work for local unions in the Baltimore area around health and safety. This group has also been active in the legislative area and was largely responsible for the recently passed bill reforming the occupational disease section of

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Mr. Warren Smith (cont'd)
Secretary-Treasurer, Ohio AFL-CIO
President, WISH

the Maryland Workmen's Compensation Law. Both of these groups could be of great help in developing the annual for Maryland and holding the training as well as providing or finding medical and legal expertise for workers with occupational disease.

I look forward to hearing from you and hope we can become a part of your workers' compensation project.

Sincerely,

Thomas M. Bradley

Thomas M. Bradley,
President

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cc: Dave Wilson

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