

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact:

John Van Doorn at the Ohio Association for Justice 614.341.6800

**Lawsuit filed on behalf of Ohio amputees injured on the job**

*Elimination of "lump sum" provision violates "single subject" rule and reduces amputees' benefits*

**Columbus** – Attorneys representing Ohio’s injured workers and their families today filed suit in Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court against the state over recent changes to the state’s workers’ compensation law. The lawsuit cites the recent passage of Ohio House Bill 487, the mid-biennium budget review bill, as a violation of the state’s constitutional “single subject” rule regarding legislation. The suit contends that the workers’ compensation provisions, which impact access to BWC and IC publications, open the door to private insurance and, most importantly, eliminate lump sum payments to amputees, should not have been allowed to proceed because they are not part of the budget and were inserted as a line item at the last second to avoid public discussion and debate.

HB 487 contains a section (4123.57) that eliminates a previously adopted rule allowing Ohio workers who have suffered catastrophic injury (*i.e.* injuries in which someone loses their hand, arm, leg or worse) to receive their intended benefit without reduction. Workers with these serious injuries often incur greater financial hardships initially, necessitating the immediate availability of the statutory benefits to which they are legally entitled.

“The worker who loses his or her leg in a work place accident has enormous barriers that they must address immediately, and one lump sum payment can get them the assistance they need right then, not months or years down the road,” said OAJ President Bob DeRose. “But now this helping hand has been snatched from them by the sneaky insertion of this change into a budget bill without any public scrutiny or debate. It is unconscionable to treat amputees this way, and we believe it also is unconstitutional.”

This lawsuit seeks to have this offending section of the legislation that violates the single subject rule declared unconstitutional and stricken from the law.

“Contrary to the Governor’s repeated statements that no changes in workers’ compensation law would take place without labor and management discussions, this stealth amendment was added at the last second with this Administration’s knowledge,” said DeRose. “As the legal representatives for injured workers, OAJ has reached out to this Administration on several occasions to discuss workers’ compensation issues, but our requests to meet have fallen on deaf ears,” DeRose added. “We call on the Governor to live up to his statements.”

#####