



## **Statement on Passage of SB 1159 Enacting a Presumption of Work Causation for COVID-19**

*The Workers' Compensation Action Network issued the following statement on the passage of Senate Bill 1159 (Hill) enacting a rebuttable presumption of work causation for workers' compensation claims for COVID-19:*

“With or without a presumption, California workers have been receiving workers’ compensation benefits for work-caused cases of COVID-19 throughout this pandemic. More than 25,000 claims have been accepted to date, at a projected cost of more than \$2 billion to businesses and public agencies.

“Even though the data never suggested that a presumption was necessary, employers came to the table to help policymakers craft a reasonable, workable presumption to add certainty that workers who catch COVID-19 from work will receive benefits.

“In the end, employers are satisfied that lawmakers rejected more extreme proposals, which would have imposed broad new liability on struggling California employers to pay for COVID-19 cases that are unrelated to work. Such proposals risked turning the workers’ compensation system into a broad social safety net for the pandemic, a responsibility that should be reserved for government, not California employers grappling with an economic crisis.

“Even though employers remained opposed to SB 1159’s outbreak provisions because they are overly burdensome, the bill represented a far more collaborative approach. Importantly, the author worked with stakeholders to focus the bill on workers who face a higher risk of workplace exposure to COVID-19, including public safety and front-line health care workers, as well as worksites where there is an outbreak.

“California employers remain committed to ensuring full and timely access to workers’ compensation benefits for work-caused cases of COVID-19.”

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