



Ohio Legislative Service Commission

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Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

Bill: [H.B. 249 of the 128th G.A.](#)

Date: January 19, 2010

Status: As Introduced

Sponsor: Reps. Heard and Letson

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: No — No local cost

Contents: Changes the definition of journalist with respect to records requests from the Bureau of Workers' Compensation

State Fiscal Highlights

- By expanding the definition of journalist, the bill could result in a higher volume of information requests processed by the legal staff of the Bureau of Workers' Compensation. However, any new costs incurred by the Workers' Compensation Fund (Fund 7023) as a result would be small.

Local Fiscal Highlights

- No direct fiscal effect on political subdivisions.

Detailed Fiscal Analysis

Overview

The bill changes the definition of "journalist," for purposes of claimant information requests made to the Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC), to include employees of a newspaper, magazine, press association, trade and business association, newsletters, news agency or wire service, a radio or television station, or a similar medium. As a result, BWC's legal staff, which handles these requests, could incur some additional administrative expenses for processing any new information requests that might occur because of this change.

Current law requires that BWC disclose claimant information only to those individuals whose primary occupation is journalism. Otherwise, claimant information is not considered to be a public record. This restriction was put in place by S.B. 7 of the 126th General Assembly and was added to by H.B. 334 of the 127th General Assembly. Previously, BWC responded to and fulfilled all claimant information requests made by individuals claiming to be journalists, including bulk requests made by trade associations, newsletters, or other entities. Overall, under the current restriction BWC has been required to handle fewer bulk information requests. By broadening the definition of journalist, the bill would increase the volume of bulk information requests to be processed. Although any new costs that the Bureau would incur to meet this new requirement are not likely to be substantial, these expenses would be covered by Workers' Compensation Fund (Fund 7023) appropriation item 855409, Administrative Services.

The bill also removes language from current law prohibiting individuals from "directly or indirectly" soliciting authority from a claimant or employer to represent that claimant or employer during a workers' compensation claim. This provision is not expected to have any fiscal impact on the state or its political subdivisions.