

Senate Commerce Committee
Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 361

Dear Chairman Erickson and members of the Senate Commerce Committee:

My name is Jennifer Young. I live in Wichita, Kansas in Senate District 30. I am appearing here today in support of Senate Bill 361.

My way of background, I obtained my bachelor's degree in management and marketing from Newman University, while at the same time playing gold on scholarship for Newman's women's golf team. A few years after graduating, I decided that I wanted to pursue a career in the health care field and went back to Newman University to obtain my Radiology Technology degree.

In June of 2017, I was injured on the job by a patient while working as a Radiology Technologist at a Family Practice Clinic in Wichita, Kansas. I broke 3 ribs and separated them from my sternum causing excruciating pain. I also hit my head which required immediate brain surgery. I am now considered fully disabled and will no longer be able to work ever again. I was in my mid 30's when this happened and had just given birth to my son a year prior. In a matter of minutes my entire life forever changed. Everything I had worked so hard for in life now meant absolutely nothing.

As a result of this injury, I am now permanently and totally disabled and will be no longer able to work ever again. I suffer from constant, unrelenting pain in my head, neck and chest. I have constant headaches and frequent migraine headaches, all of which have affected my cognitive ability and speech. My doctors have limited me to a 4-hour work day with 30 minutes of rest after 30 minutes of work.

My workers compensation claim process was and still is a nightmare. I went to work in June of 2017 a happy, healthy, wife and new mother. In a matter of one day, my family and I's entire life was flipped upside down. I could discuss with you at length about how this has personally affected me, however, what people tend to ignore is the effect this has on the families of the injured worker. My husband had to change his entire work schedule to be able to accommodate my numerous doctor's appointments, to step up and take care of our son and to be there for me during the multiple surgeries and procedures. Because of the injuries, I was no longer even able to hold my son, take my son to the park, take him on walks, take him on fun, mother/son outings, etc. not only was I robbed of my career, I was robbed of being the mother that my son deserved. I'm bringing this up because I think it is important that not only do we look at how work injuries effect the worker, but the impact it also has on the family unit as a whole.

It took me approximately 3+ long years of constant battling with the workers compensation insurance company before I could finally present my case to the court. The workers compensation insurance company still, to this day, continues to deny me much needed medical treatment that is prescribed to me by my team of physicians. The amount I was awarded is nothing compared to what I would have been able to make had I not been injured and still be currently working. The maximum amount allowed that I would be entitled to receive because I can no longer work for the rest of my life, under our current workers compensation laws, is \$155,000. It doesn't seem fair that I am supposed to somehow support my family for the next 30 years of my life off of \$155,000. At the time of my injury, I was earning approximately \$80,000 a year. If I had been able to continue working, I would have made more than \$155,000 in 2 years. It is also still my responsibility to ensure my student loans are also paid off.

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The workers compensation laws in Kansas need to change. The amount of stress that my family and myself has had to endure since my work injury has definitely not helped in my healing and treatment process. I ask that you put yourself in my shoes, or think about if something like this happened to one of your children, or loved one. I'm asking that you please stand with me, and the thousands of other Kansans that share a story similar to mine, and help change the workers compensation laws in Kansas. It's time to make a change.

My understanding is that if I lived in any other state in the nation, I would have more protections than I have here in Kansas. I would likely have access to the needed medical support I need to try to lead a normal life, perhaps even giving me the opportunity to get back to work and support my family. I want to work.

I believe you love this state as much as I do. I believe you wanted to be elected to the Legislature to help people like me have the best possible life in Kansas. I am asking you to support changes in the workers compensation laws that will improve the protection of Kansans injured on the job.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Young

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