

Submitter: Rachel Freed

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Labor and Business

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB946

I am writing to formally oppose the proposal to authorize the payment out of the Workers' Benefit Fund for the expenses incurred by the Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor and Industries in carrying out statutory duties. While I understand the importance of supporting the Commissioner in fulfilling their responsibilities, I believe this approach raises several significant concerns.

First and foremost, utilizing the Workers' Benefit Fund for these expenses could divert vital resources away from their intended purpose. The Fund is designed to provide critical support and benefits to injured workers, and any misallocation of these funds could undermine the safety net that workers rely on during their recovery. It is essential that we prioritize the needs of those who have been injured on the job and ensure that they receive the full benefits they are entitled to.

Additionally, this proposal could create a precedent that may lead to further financial strain on the Workers' Benefit Fund. If we begin authorizing payments for administrative expenses, it could open the door to additional requests that may not align with the Fund's primary mission. This could ultimately jeopardize the stability of the Fund and erode public trust in its management.

Moreover, there are alternative funding mechanisms that could be explored to support the Commissioner's activities without impacting the Workers' Benefit Fund. For instance, seeking appropriations from the general fund or implementing cost-saving measures within the Bureau could provide the necessary resources while safeguarding the interests of workers.

Lastly, transparency and accountability are paramount when it comes to managing public funds. Shifting expenses to the Workers' Benefit Fund without a clear framework for oversight could lead to mismanagement or misuse of funds. It is crucial that we establish a system that ensures accountability and prioritizes the welfare of workers above all else.

In conclusion, I urge you to reconsider this proposal. We must ensure that the Workers' Benefit Fund remains dedicated to its original purpose of supporting injured workers and that any administrative expenses are funded through appropriate channels. Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I hope you will consider the implications of this proposal carefully.