

Legislative History for Connecticut Act

PA 80-10

<b>Act Number:</b>	10	<b>Year:</b>	1980	
<b>Bill Number:</b>	SB 256			
<b>Senate Pages:</b>	396-397, 403			3
<b>House Pages:</b>	880-881			2
<b>Committee:</b>	Labor 110-111, 118, 137			4
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Transcripts from the Joint Standing Committee Public Hearing(s) and/or Senate  
and House of Representatives Proceedings

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PA80-10

Joint Standing Committee hearings, Labor. 1980

Proceedings / Connecticut General Assembly, House. 1980v.23:pt.3

Proceedings / Connecticut General Assembly, Senate. 1980 v.23:pt.2

Wednesday, March 19, 1980

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THE PRESIDENT:

The question is on acceptance and passage. Will you remark, Senator.

SENATOR CIARLONE:

Yes, I will. This bill would prohibit the Commission on Hospital and Health Care from directing or controlling the use of principal and all income received by any hospital from restricted and unrestricted grants, gifts, contributions, bequests and endowments. The bill was reported favorably out of committee and there was no opposition. If there is no opposition here this afternoon, I would also move this to the Consent Calendar.

THE PRESIDENT:

Remarks on the bill? Objection to placing on the Consent Calendar? Hearing neither, it is so ordered.

THE ITEM IS PLACED ON THE CONSENT CALENDAR.

THE CLERK:

Cal. 36. File 32. Senate Bill 256. AN ACT CONCERNING MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT FOR WORKERS' COMPENSATION CLAIMANTS RECEIVING MEDICAL ATTENTION. Favorable report of the Committee on Labor and Public Employees.

THE PRESIDENT:

Senator Lieberman.

SENATOR LIEBERMAN: (10th)

Mr. President, I move for acceptance of the joint

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committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

THE PRESIDENT:

The question is on acceptance and passage. Will you remark, Senator.

SENATOR LIEBERMAN:

Yes, sir. Mr. President, the bill simply raises from ten to fifteen cents the regular mileage allowance in line with the painful reality of what it costs to buy gas these days. If there is no objection, I move it to the Consent Calendar.

THE PRESIDENT:

Will you remark further on the bill? Is there objection to placing it on Consent? Hearing neither, it is so ordered. THE ITEM IS ON THE CONSENT CALENDAR.

THE CLERK:

Moving to page eight of the Calendar, Cal. 66, File 61. Senate Bill 45. AN ACT CONCERNING THE DUE DATE OF THE DEPARTMENT ON AGING'S ANNUAL REPORT. Favorable report of the Committee on Human Services.

THE PRESIDENT:

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN: (18th)

Mr. President, I move acceptance of the joint committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

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THE PRESIDENT:

The Clerk will now call the items on the Consent Calendar.

THE CLERK:

Page two - Cal. 43, 45, 46, 47. Page three - Cal. 48, 49, 50, 51, 52. Page four - 53, 54, 55, 56, 57. Page five - Cal. 58, 59. Page six - Cal. 32, 34, 36. Page eight - Cal. 66 and 68. Page nine - Cal. 69, 70 and 71. That concludes the Consent Calendar. SJ 29, SJ 31, SJ 32, SJ 33, SJ 34, SR 12, SR 13, SR 14, SR 15, SR 16, SR 17, SR 18, SR 19, SR 20, SR 21,  
 THE PRESIDENT: HB 5195, SB 135, SB 256, SB 45, SB 48, SB 46, HB 5276, HB 5296, SR 22

You have been so informed. The machine is now open. The machine is closed. The Clerk will take a tally.

The vote is 35 Yea - 0 Nay. THE CONSENT CALENDAR IS PASSED.

Further business on the Clerk's desk.

THE CLERK:

The Clerk has two Petitions. Petition 18, Bill, Senate Bill 201 entitled, AAC THE USE OF HIGH SULPHUR FUEL BY CONNECTICUT FUEL CONSUMERS.

Petition 19, Senate Bill 279, AN ACT PROHIBITING THE USE OF STEEL JAW TRAPS.

THE PRESIDENT:

Senator Lieberman.

SENATOR LIEBERMAN:

Mr. President, I would like to indicate for the record that Senator Mustone has been here today. She missed the roll

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CLERK:

Calendar No. 117, File No. 32, Senate Bill No. 256. AN ACT CONCERNING MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT FOR WORKERS' COMPENSATION CLAIMANTS RECEIVING MEDICAL ATTENTION. Favorable report of the Committee on Labor and Public Employees.

REP. MASTRIANNI: (104th)

Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER ABATE:

Rep. Silvio Mastrianni.

REP. MASTRIANNI: (104th)

Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to bring out a bill that's going to help the working man instead of taking money away from them. Mr. Speaker, what this bill does is increase the mileage from ten cents per mile to fifteen cents a mile for reimbursement to be paid to workmen's compensation claimants using their cars to and from medical care. I move its acceptance, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER ABATE:

The question is on acceptance of the Joint Committee's favorable report and passage of the bill. Will you remark further, Sir? Will you remark further? Will you remark further on this bill? If not, would all the members please be seated? Would all staff and guests please come to the well of the House? The machine will be opened.

The House of Representatives is voting by roll at this time. Would all members please return to the Chamber immediately. The House of Representatives is voting by roll at this time. Would all members please return to the Chamber immediately.

Have all the members voted? Have all the members voted? Would the members please check the roll call machine to determine if their vote is properly recorded. The machine will be locked. The Clerk will take the tally.

Will the Clerk please announce the tally?

CLERK:

Senate Bill No. 256.

Total number voting	139
Necessary for passage	70
Those voting yea	139
Those voting nay	0
Those absent and not voting	12

SPEAKER ABATE:

The Bill passes.

CLERK:

Calendar, Page 12. Calendar No. 126, File No. 130. House Bill No. 5761. AN ACT CONCERNING RATE SETTING BY THE COMMISSION ON HOSPITALS AND HEALTH CARE FOR HOME HEALTH AND HOMEMAKER-HOME HEALTH AIDE AGENCIES. Favorable report of the Committee on Public Health.

MR. DEL VECCHIO: (continued)

members are employed in some of Connecticut's most hazardous industries -- foundries, smelters, steel and brass mills, scrap yards, stamping plants, rolling mills and similar industries. Many of our members are exposed to hazardous conditions and as a result, a very high proportion of steelworker members suffer occupationally related injuries and illnesses. I would conservatively estimate that at least 1,000 of our Connecticut members suffer lost time accidents or illnesses in an average year. That is why our Steelworkers' union has a very special concern for legislation that will promote better occupational safety and health practices and improve Workers Compensation benefits and coverage. Our union is concerned about all workers though we have a special gut feeling on safety and health issues because our members who work in high hazard industries are so directly and sometimes tragically affected.

To show how concerned sometimes our members get, we just had a wildcat strike at the Tilo Company in Stratford solely over a safety and health issue where most of the workers walked out. It involved fiberglass exposure. We strongly feel that there can be improvements in safety and health conditions when an awareness is developed among the workers, the employers, labor unions and medical personnel. Workers must be fully aware of all toxic materials that they may be exposed to. They must be aware of the potential hazards as well as the safest means of handling toxic materials. Such knowledge increases safety awareness among all the parties and promotes efforts to minimize the hazard. That is why we strongly support the right to know legislation before this Committee and in keeping with that position, the Steelworkers' Union supports Senate Bill 254 which would provide the necessary enforcement powers which we do not feel are a duplication of OSHA.

We also support Senate Bill 256 which would increase the mileage allotment for travel relating to Workers Compensation cases from 10 cents to 15 cents a mile. This increase from the 10 cent rate is long overdue, given the skyrocketing cost of gasoline. Since the intent of that portion of the Workers Compensation laws was to cover the transportation costs of injured workers undergoing treatment and therapy

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MR. DEL VECCHIO: (continued)

and it is obvious that a reasonable increase in the mileage reimbursement is not only justified but fully in keeping with the original intent of the law. We are glad that the Committee has brought that bill up for a hearing, and we hope that it will be supported fully.

The Steelworkers Union in our state strongly supports enactment of legislation requiring lung function tests and X rays for workers employed in foundry industries and I would like to state I'm glad that us and the Cast Metals Federation finally have some agreement on something. Most Occupational Health professionals with any familiarity of the foundry industry would recommend regular health examinations for employees in that industry. Standard foundry safety manuals and industry manuals also recognize the need for such monitoring. A number of employers do actually provide such examinations in recognition of the fact that their employees may work under conditions that could cause or aggravate a variety of lung diseases and that early detection of any such problem is crucial. The General Assembly has actually already recognized the need for this type of legislation. In 1977 Public Act 77-445 was passed which provided for lung function tests to be administered to employees exposed to air contaminants. However, after three years on the books the law has never been put into effect because of the unending confusion as to how the regulations should be developed, how they could be enforced and how enforcement could be monitored. In effect, even though a law was passed, it has meant nothing to our members or any Connecticut workers because it has turned out to be unenforceable, and I see that the law proposed is proposed as an attachment to the law that's already been passed. Now here we are again, trying to gain the same type of legislation that was already passed in 1977 but this time we want a law that is clear, precise, specific and enforceable. We think the law should require employers in specific industries such as foundries to provide an annual lung function test and a bi-annual chest X ray to all the workers employed in the operation. Our union represents over 1,000 Connecticut workers employed in metalcasting operations. At Bullard Castings pulmonary function tests and chest X rays are negotiated into our contract. The same contract provision was just negotiated

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MS. TIANTI: (continued)

more expertise than I can, but in essence, it has come about as a result of a court decision which makes it necessary to clarify the language as to the responsibilities of failure to pay for contributions to employee welfare funds. And I think this is clarification that is necessary because of that recent court decision and the State Labor Council urges you to give this a favorable consideration.

SEN. MATTHEWS: Mr. Chairman? Betty, do you happen to know which court decision it is -- we can find it...

MS. TIANTI: I don't have it with me but there is a court decision and there are speakers that I know would be able to answer that question, Senator Matthews.

I'd also like to register the State Labor Council's support to Raised Committee Bill 254 which is the establishment of civil and criminal penalties for violations of the worker's right to know law. We think, certainly -- and as you know, we've indicated our support for a vehicle for employees to know what hazardous substances they're exposed to -- and certainly it is necessary to have enforcement proceedings for that legislation. We would hope that bill receives a favorable report.

I'd also like to indicate our support for Raised Committee Bill 256, except I don't think it goes far enough. This is the Act Concerning Mileage Reimbursement for Workers Compensation Claimants Receiving Medical Attention. It's been the intent, of course, of the legislation to compensate people for their mileage expenses and it's been too long at the ten cents an hour -- I mean at ten cents mile -- but I think to go only to fifteen cents is really unrealistic when, currently, the state pays 20 cents a mile to its employees for mileage and I do know if -- on various boards and commissions I'm not sure what the mileage is for legislators, but under the state statute it is for Commissioners, for boards, and so forth, as well as for its employees twenty cents a mile. So we'd urge you to amend this to reimburse at the rate of 20 cents a mile instead of 15 cents.

I'd also like to indicate our support for Raised Committee Bill 5514, which is An Act Permitting Classified Municipal Employees to be a Candidate for State Elected Office. The

SEN. SKELLEY: (continued)

trades they basically, physically can handle, - operating engineers, they run , they can obviously run cranes, it doesn't take a great deal of strength to pull a lever on a crane, they deal as civil engineers and surveyors on points and testing concrete, but I find that working in the work place in a traditionally all male atmosphere that perhaps the male employee is probably more nervous than the female employee. Changing your language patters would probably be one of the first things and while he should be aware of that I'm not quite sure. But the -- for the most part, at least from where I have been exposed to women in the construction industry, they've been more or less welcomed. I haven't found a great deal of abuse that existed -- that I thought -- personally, I personally thought would happen. But we are aware of it, I think this is the reason we raised the bill.

MS. HYDE: Okay, thank you.

SEN. SKELLEY: Thank you very much. John Arcudi.

MR. JOHN ARCUDI: I'm John Arcudi, Chairman of the Worker's Compensation Commission. I want to address remarks to Bill 256, a bill that raises the mileage allowance in section 31.312 of the statute from 10¢ to 15¢ a mile. Basically, this bill, along with a lot of the legislation in the last two or three years, has been proposed in the Worker's Compensation field as a catch up - catching up with what has happened due to the incursions that OPEC has made on the American economy in this particular instance, and we of the Commission feel that there are enough cases, you have UCON Medical School, you have Yale Medical School, you have the whole of eastern Connecticut where people have to travel to see doctors after they've been injured, and you also have the trend of doctors outside of the urban centers to the suburbs which causes the urban worker who lives still in the urban center to have to travel to the suburbs for an appointment. You have the problem, and we feel that it is only fair that the mileage be raised to compensate for the extra money which the worker has to spend to get to the doctor and to the hospital center for treatment of a work related injury. Any questions.

SEN. SKELLEY: Any questions? Thank you very much, John. Renato Ricotti, followed by Michael Moore. Michael Moore. John Anderson.