

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Michael K. Gruber

Happy Holidays! It's hard to believe that 2017 is almost upon us. The past year has been yet another rollercoaster ride for WILG members and injured workers. While the WILG 2016 Year in Review newsletter will detail all of our organizations efforts throughout the year, some highlights were significant Court victories in several states including Oklahoma and Florida, and opt-out legislation being withdrawn in Tennessee. The increasing inadequacy of state workers compensation systems was addressed by several members of Congress and the Department of Labor, generating national attention as to how workers compensation deform harms not only injured workers but also has an adverse effect on several levels of society. Unfortunately, the positive momentum created by the Department of Labor report has been blunted by the outcome of the November elections. While it may be too early to assess the exact impact of those elections on the federal level, what is clear is that injured workers now face increasingly conservative state governments. As of January, 25 states will have both branches of their legislature and the governor's office dominated by Republicans. WILG members will have to be more vigilant than ever in swiftly identifying injurious reform legislation and in building coalitions to defeat such measures.

The holidays are a time to reflect on how fortunate many of us are, and it is also a time that serves to reinforce the importance of what WILG and its' members accomplish on behalf of injured workers. Suffering an injury at work and facing uncertainty as to your monetary and medical future is difficult at any time, and even more so during the holidays. Ensuring reasonable and adequate benefits helps give injured workers the chance to have a joyous holiday.

I wish everyone a safe, healthy and happy holiday season.