

Your Views:

Tuesday September 28, 2004

Claimants are not the only cheaters

In a Sept. 22 editorial, "Workers' comp review is due," the Daily Mail took issue with my comments regarding a proposed review of permanent total disability awards by the Workers Compensations Board of Managers.

My point before the board was to note that the review of workers' PTD awards was also the perfect time to examine whether or not these were awards illegally shifted to the notorious "second injury fund."

If the Daily Mail thinks this is scandalous, so be it. That would explain perhaps why the newspaper writes so little about the scheme.

Many big corporations used the second injury fund to illegally avoid paying claims for injured workers. These companies would dishonestly shift claims to the second injury fund, saving themselves millions of dollars because the injury was not on their record.

This practice has cost the system hundreds of millions of dollars, which in the end injured workers, and honest businesses will be forced to pay.

The second injury fund no longer exists, but many of those who profited from it are still around.

Why would the Daily Mail, or anyone, not want to investigate this alleged corruption? By rejecting and vilifying our call to action, the Daily Mail again has made it clear they will protect and shield corporate cheaters.

The ACT Foundation has gone on record numerous times in support of eliminating all fraud, and I do so again now. If a person is cheating the system by getting an award they do not deserve, put an end to it and make them pay back the funds.

But to investigate only claimants and ignore the largest documented group of cheaters, nonpaying corporations, mostly in the coal industry, is wrong.

It is a shame the Daily Mail has a double standard when it comes to fraud and corruption.

Steve White

Charleston

White is director of the Affiliated Construction Trades Foundation.