

TESTIMONY OF R. KIP BROWN
BEFORE THE
JOINT HOUSE JUDICIARY AND LABOR RELATIONS COMMITTEE
NOVEMBER 30, 1989

Chairman Caltagirone, Chairman Cohen, members of the House Judiciary and Labor Relations Committees, I am Kip Brown, Safety and Loss Control Administrator for the Dana Corporation, Parish Division in Reading, Pennsylvania. I have asked the Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry to allow me to testify before your joint committees to emphasize the impact that these three bills would have on business and industry in Pennsylvania.

Dana has five separate facilities in Pennsylvania, ranging in size from one hundred and ten employees up to two thousand and eight hundred. Each facility is different from the other, in both the manner in which they are managed and the services or products they produce. I have worked in two of these facilities.

In the past I have been the labor president of a Dana, United Auto Worker local and currently with management, responsible for safety and loss control. This has allowed me to see both viewpoints on employee safety and compensation problems, and believe me there are many areas of agreement. No one wants to see an employee exposed to hazards or receive injuries. In our facility we have a dedicated safety program and full time safety employes both labor and management. They investigate accidents and try to eliminate injuries before they happen. We have Workers Compensation committees that meet biweekly to try and resolve problems to ensure the injured employee receives all benefits

that they are entitled and that we can return them to work as soon as possible. Labor and Business do have the capabilities to work together and progress if they are allowed to. They know better than anyone, the need for cooperation on providing a safe and healthful work environment.

There is a need for workers compensation changes, this has become a very costly part of doing business in Pennsylvania. These changes should not be at the sole discretion of either business or labor, but as a joint venture. As Mr. Mackie has already stated the success of Linden Hall, I am in complete agreement with that spirit and his proposal.

Over the past three years I have been asked to compare several states and their workers compensation laws. The reason was that our plant was planning to build several new facilities nearer to our customers. One of the areas that was considered prior to choosing an actual plant site was that of workers compensation. Naturally, this was not the only area that was considered, but it was one. To date, we have built two new facilities in other states. This only demonstrates that industry does look at the compensation laws and how they will affect its business.

I hope that the Congress of Pennsylvania is progressive enough to allow our state to move in the right direction. House Bills 1012 and 1013 are not the answers that are needed for a good industrial atmosphere. Allow Business, Labor and the Legislature to propose the answers. We do this all the time when negotiating contracts. Use our

abilities, our experiences, and we can reach the needed solutions that will lead to resolving the problems of the Pennsylvania Compensation Act, and create the safest working conditions for all employees.

Thank you for allowing me to appear before these committees.