

What is wrong with this picture?

A recent exposé in *Newsweek* magazine chronicled how soldiers injured and impaired in Iraq are treated by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Sadly, these heroes are often relegated to waiting lists of weeks or even months to receive non-emergency treatment, and many veterans are claiming the care they do receive is often substandard. In addition, soldiers wait an average of six months, and sometimes over one year, to begin receiving their disability benefit payments.

According to this article, a veteran with a disability rating of 100 percent receives about \$2,400 a month—more if he or she has children. A 50 percent rating brings in around \$700 a month.

A Disturbing Comparison

Compare those paltry amounts with the amount of money an **illegal** alien who is injured on the job in Washington is entitled to receive—a whopping \$4,038 a month in time loss benefits. That doesn't include the medical costs associated with treating these illegal

aliens with the best medical care the state can provide. Nor does it include the cost of providing interpretive services, because the injured illegal can't speak English. It also does not include the cost of vocational rehabilitation (worker retraining) the state provides illegal workers.

Did You Know?

Many people are surprised to learn the state of Washington allows workers' compensation benefits to be collected by illegal workers. In fact, an illegal worker can continue to collect benefits and receive medical care even if they are deported. The state Department of Labor & Industries (L&I) pays tens of thousands of dollars to doctors in countries like Mexico, Ukraine, Ireland, Canada, UK, Australia, etc. to treat workers injured on the job in Washington who are now back in their country of origin.

And while Immigration & Naturalization Service (INS) has requested L&I report illegal workers for deportation, as do other state agencies (Employment Security for one), L&I has declared since there is no federal provision requiring them to notify INS of such, they will not comply with INS' request.

The Cost to Taxpayers

Just how much are these claims by illegal workers costing the state? BIAW obtained documents verifying L&I paid workers' compensation benefits totaling \$496,709 for just eight of the claims filed by illegal workers in recent years. One of these cases had a total claims cost of \$204,476, even though the claimant admits he "bought" a social security card for the purpose of fraudulently obtaining employment (no matter, L&I will continue time loss benefits). Another case cost \$80,327, yet another \$62,834.

These examples are cases BIAW discovered on its own—there are many more claims that have been paid to illegal workers, but L&I won't divulge how many or how much they cost.

And, believe it or not, L&I will pay for

vocational rehabilitation for illegal workers—even though by law, it is illegal for them to hold the job for which they are being trained. BIAW obtained some interesting documents related to voc rehab for illegal workers via a public records request. One voc rehab counselor notes in the progress report for an injured workers' voc rehab that some of the barriers to the injured worker reentering the work force are: The claimant has a very limited work history; The claimant has a 1st grade education obtained in Mexico; The claimant does not read, write or speak English; and, **Per the claimants self-report he is an undocumented worker and therefore, cannot legally work in the United States.**


Better Medical Care to Boot

Another disturbing comparison of how injured illegal workers are treated by Washington's workers' compensation system compared to injured soldiers—workers' compensation patients are referred to the best specialists in the state, and sometimes in the country, for treatment and it is provided in a very timely manner.

Soldiers wounded in action are not as lucky—one African-American amputee of the war has been forced to use a fake limb that matches the skin tone of a Caucasian. This hero has been waiting nearly three years for a prosthetic that matches his skin color. That would never happen to an illegal alien injured on the job in Washington State.

Isn't it Ironic?

It is ironic Gregoire is demanding the feds pay \$50 million to reimburse the state's cost for incarcerating illegal immigrants. In one newspaper report Gregoire said "the U.S. Constitution gives the federal government responsibility for keeping illegal immigrants from entering the country."

Perhaps if Gregoire didn't make Washington such an attractive and enticing place for illegals, she wouldn't have so many. 

BIAW Remodeling in Excellence Awards Call for Entries

The BIAW Remodelers Council is now accepting entries for the annual Excellence in Remodeling Awards program to be held June 27 at Resort Semiahmoo during the Summer Board meeting.

If you are interested in submitting an entry, please contact Amanda or Jenni at the BIAW office at 800-228-4229. Or go to BIAW.com and download an entry application.

Entries are due in the BIAW office May 25th.

