

April 23, 2004

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Greedy companies set high rates

A RECENT ad in local newspapers, purchased by state Sen. Frank Deem, claimed to have found the solution for solving high insurance rates that plague West Virginia. Seems he thinks that taking away the legal rights of injured people will fix all the woes of insurance companies. He's probably right, but this shows very little respect for his constituents. Labor, however, is interested in helping the people in West Virginia, and not the bloated insurance companies that have Sen. Deem's sympathy.

Deem wrote: "They [the AARP and labor unions] should be fighting for the consumer to hold down the large awards insurance companies have to pay out, forcing them to raise their rates to their policyholders."

This doesn't even make sense. We ARE fighting for the consumer, but we're fighting to make sure that injured people get what they deserve, and what they need to survive. Too many politicians try to get us to believe that the millions of dollars of premium increases are due to people collecting insurance awards. The easiest way to correct a problem is through the weakest group: the customer. Insurance companies should be held to a higher standard. An independent fraud unit would be a good start.

The problem with insurance coverage in our state is not greedy consumers — it's greedy insurance companies who balk at keeping their end of the bargain. It's time to start holding insurance companies accountable to their customers, us. Tort reform would only hurt those people who are unable to hire expensive lawyers to defend themselves against these corporate giants. There's nothing in tort reform to help anybody who does not have a vested interest in profits of the insurance industry.

It's time for every politician in the state to join us in fighting for the interest of working families. If they're not willing to stand up to the wealthy insurance executives, then perhaps it's time for voters to remind them who they are supposed to represent.

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