



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

SEP 23 2018

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am returning Assembly Bill 479 without my signature.

This bill would require physicians to consider a specific list of impairments when determining a worker's disability for the purposes of workers' compensation when that worker suffers from breast cancer. This proposal is similar to three previous measures that I have vetoed, Assembly Bill 570 in 2017, Assembly Bill 1643 in 2016 and Assembly 305 in 2015.

This bill and its predecessors have repeatedly singled out specific conditions and proposed a special set of rules that apply to them. This would result in an even more complex workers' compensation system that would essentially be "disease by statute," which would ultimately burden injured workers seeking quick resolution to their claims.

Policy questions about the adequacy of the State's workers' compensation system are best addressed through empirically based research and analysis. Therefore, I am directing the Division of Workers' Compensation Administrative Director, in consultation with the Commission on Health and Safety and Workers' Compensation, to contract with an outside independent research organization to undertake an evidenced based evaluation of the issue. Specifically, the Administrative Director should review the following:

1. Do the standards for determining impairment due to occupational injury or illness accurately reflect the level of impairment caused by industrial cancer?
2. Study and compare the differences between the fifth and sixth editions of the American Medical Association Guides with respect to determining impairment resulting from industrial cancer.
3. Do the standards for determining impairment resulting from industrial cancer exhibit bias based on immutable characteristics such as gender, race or ethnicity?

Every stakeholder in the workers' compensation system, but specifically the injured workers directly affected, has a vested interest in a comprehensive response to the issues raised by this series of bills. I am directing the Administrative Director to report on these questions by March 1, 2020 in order to inform the Legislature and key stakeholders on how best to address the important issues raised by this bill.

Sincerely,

Edmund G. Brown Jr.

