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Wisconsin Celebrates Worker's Compensation Centennial

Secretary Perez, business & labor leaders mark 100 years of first in nation program that provides workers safe working conditions, gives Wisconsin competitive edge

MADISON – Governor Scott Walker has proclaimed May 1-7 Worker's Compensation Week in Wisconsin to honor the 100th anniversary of the signing of the first constitutional state worker's compensation law in the United States, making Wisconsin a pioneer in a program that today sets the state apart from others while protecting workers and their families.

Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Manny Perez presented the proclamation during a commemorative ceremony at Alliant Energy headquarters.

"Worker's compensation is one of the most important laws enacted in the history of modern industrial society," Secretary Perez said. "This pioneering legislation remains one of Wisconsin's most respected contributions to the nation's laws."

One hundred years ago on May 3, 1911, Wisconsin Governor Francis E. McGovern signed into law the United States' first constitutional worker's compensation law.

Secretary Perez said that today, Wisconsin has the fourth lowest worker's compensation average cost per case in the nation, the lowest worker's compensation premiums in the Midwest, a nationally recognized return to work program, and an effective alternative dispute resolution process.

"Across all industries, Wisconsin employers, on average, pay less in worker's compensation premiums because of their commitment to safety as a mindset in the workplace," Secretary Perez said. "This helps Wisconsin companies stay competitive, which in turn contributes to job creation."

Secretary Perez said a hallmark of Wisconsin's model program is the collaborative effort of business and labor in ensuring safe working conditions. The Worker's Compensation Advisory Council (WCAC), which dates back to 1911, consists of five labor and five management representatives, plus three representatives of the insurance industry. Secretary Perez said the council provides a forum for labor and management to work together to continually improve of the worker's compensation system.

Council members, past and present, joined Secretary Perez in celebrating the centennial at Alliant Energy. As part of the event, Secretary Perez recognized Alliant Energy for its outstanding commitment to workplace safety.

"As we mark the centennial year of our pioneering worker's compensation law, Wisconsin citizens justifiably take satisfaction and pride in continuing the work of those imaginative and inspired men and women, who one-hundred years ago, gave impetus to this effective system of social insurance that is now universally accepted," Secretary Perez said.

[Read Governor Walker's Proclamation naming May 1-7 Worker's Compensation Week.](#)

For more information: <http://www.workerscomp100.org/>
<http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/wc/>