



Ankin Law Office LLC

Protecting the Rights of Injured Workers

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Illinois Workers' Compensation System Under Scrutiny



Should police officers who seek [Illinois workers' compensation](#) benefits receive preferential treatment? I think most people would agree that they shouldn't—and instead, everyone seeking benefits should be treated the same.

However, recent facts have come to light that suggest that an Illinois State Trooper's hearing was scheduled with the intent to avoid press coverage.

In October [we reported](#) on this case, explaining that Illinois State Trooper, Matt Mitchell, was injured when he was involved in a car accident that occurred when he was responding to an emergency call. He was talking to his girlfriend on his cell phone and responding to emails when he lost control of his police cruiser, which was traveling in excess of 100 mph. The vehicle jumped the median and collided head on with another car, killing its teenage occupants, Kelli and Jessica Uhl.

He later filed for workers' compensation benefits, and, as explained in this [ABA Journal blog post](#), there are now allegations that the Illinois workers' compensation arbitrator may have acted improperly when scheduling the hearing:

A lawyer arbitrator tried to keep reporters out of a public hearing by scheduling a hearing date "on the sly," her e-mails reveal...

Workers compensation hearings are supposed to be open to the public. The [Belleville News Democrat](#) quotes from these e-mails:

- From Teague to a court reporter, asking for possible dates she can work at the hearing: "We are going to try and do it on the sly with no press."
- From Teague to the trooper's lawyer: "There is nothing I can do to keep [News Democrat reporters] out of a public hearing, but will be more than willing to do a special setting and an unknown place and time!"

These allegations, if true, are troubling. The workers' compensation hearing process is open to the public and all individuals seeking compensation should be treated the same, regardless of who they are. Police officers should be treated no differently simply because of their occupation.

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To learn more about Illinois workers' compensation benefits, you can visit the [Illinois Workers' Compensation Commission's website](#), where you can find this [useful handbook](#) that explains the process for injuries and illnesses occurring after February 1, 2006. As explained in the handbook, in many cases, retaining the services of an [Illinois workers' compensation attorney](#) may be advisable.

Howard Ankin of Ankin Law Office LLC (www.ankinlaw.com) handles [workers' compensation](#) and [personal injury cases](#). Mr. Ankin can be reached at (312) 346-8780 and howard@ankinlaw.com.

By [Admin - BN](#)
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