



Chief Leader

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PEF NEWSCLIP

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PEF, CSEA Laud Pataki

Enact Workplace Anti-Violence Bill

By REUVEN BLAU

Governor Pataki June 7 signed the Workplace Violence Prevention bill, which requires managers to assess risks and implement programs to help prevent job-site attacks.

The two largest unions for state workers, the Public Employees' Federation and the Civil Service Employees' Association, had extensively lobbied in support of the legislation. They are also backing two related workplace safety bills, which are still making their way through various stages of the legislative process.

'Governor's Leading'

"We are extremely pleased," said PEF President Roger E. Benson during a June 9 phone conversation. "This piece of legislation has been around for 15 years. We think this is going to make public-sector workplaces safer for our members."

According to Mr. Benson, PEF spent more than \$263,000 to mobilize and educate the union's members, publicize the issue, and pay for lobbyists. The union also distributed DVDs and brochures to state legislators outlining arguments supporting the workplace violence prevention measures.

The CSEA ran television ads backing the Worksite Security Act, which was sponsored by Republican State Sen. Nicholas A. Spano and Democratic Assemblywoman Susan V. John.

The bill requires state agencies with more than 20 employees to assess the risks in their buildings and work areas and develop appropriate, cost-effective measures to protect employees and the public.

"CSEA believes this legislation is a common-sense approach to a challenging situ-



GOVERNOR PATAKI: Acts to protect workers.

ation and Governor Pataki has demonstrated good sense by signing it into law," said CSEA President Danny Donohue in a statement. "Assessing and reducing risks in public work sites will not only benefit the people who work in those locations, it will benefit all the people of New York in many ways."

According to the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, homicide has become the second leading cause of occupational death, surpassed only by vehicle-related deaths. Government workers make up 18 percent of the U.S. work force but 31 percent of the victims of workplace violence, NIOSH data revealed.

"Workplace violence is an increasingly visible element," Senator Spano remarked.

'First Line of Defense'

Ms. John added, "For the protection of all hardworking families, this legislation is the first line of defense for their safety, and I congratulate the Governor for his decision to sign this bill into law."

PEF is also supporting the Judi Scanlon bill, named after a PEF-represented health-care worker who was murdered by a mentally ill patient while conducting a home visit in Buffalo in 1998. The measure, which is in committee in both legislative houses, would allow Intensive Case Managers (ICM) to request accompaniment by a colleague during home visits.

In addition, PEF is lobbying for a bill that would require the state Department of Civil Service to annually report employee injuries and related costs to help agencies create prevention strategies.