

# Congress proposes bill to increase protections for US workers

The U.S. Congress will be considering a proposed bill aimed at extending safety regulations and workplace protections for workers. The bill, Protecting America's Workers Act, would strengthen the Occupational Safety and Health Act and benefit workers in Pennsylvania and throughout the country.

The proposed bill would offer protection to more American workers that are currently not protected under OSHA regulations or workers' compensation laws. The additional workers that would be protected by OSHA include flight attendants, certain government agency workers and state prison guards.

The bill would also pose harsher penalties for companies that knowingly violate OSHA standards that contribute to a workplace fatality. Under current laws, employers can only face misdemeanor charges for safety violations that lead to worker's death. The proposed bill would change this, making employers face felony charges for willful violations that cause a workplace fatality as well as create a minimum civil penalty of \$50,000 for employers who knowingly violate standards that result in a fatality.

Several lawmakers support the bill and hope that it will be passed to increase the protections for workers. However, this is not the first time lawmakers have tried to increase the penalties for employers but previous efforts failed. Lawmakers believe that this time it will be different, especially after recent investigations have shown that workplace deaths continue to plague the country, in many different industries.

Supporters of the bill say that this legislation can help

reduce workplace injuries and fatalities by increasing the protections for workers as well as the penalties for employers. They said that the bill is not only beneficial for workers but also employers because it will help reduce workplace injuries by making employers more accountable for their actions.

**Source:** The Hill, "[Senate Dems line up behind worker protection bill](#)," Ben Goad, March 29, 2013