

Paralyzed Worker Receives 11 Years, Six Figures of Back Pay



In a major decision handed down from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Workers' Compensation Court (Bureau Claim Number 2416884), a paraplegic who suffered an injury in 2002 while working as a camp counselor has received an increase of his Average Weekly Wage (AWW) dating back to the accident. As a result, the young man received just over \$177,000 in compensation and interest, according to his attorney [Matt Wilson](#) of Martin Law.

At issue was whether the man's AWW should reflect his wages at the time of the accident or if they should take into account the fact that he also received room and board at the camp, which would bear its own compensation value above and beyond the actual wages. While the employer argued that the man's contract with his former employer did not assign a dollar value to room and board, the court agreed with Wilson, opining that "value assigned to room and board cannot abrogate the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act."

"Like any Pennsylvania worker, he is entitled to compensation after an injury," said Wilson. "Not partial compensation, full compensation. This young man was forced to live on less than \$200 per week as a result of a gross miscalculation of benefits, so we assisted him in his efforts to obtain what was rightfully due under Workers' Compensation law."

The client at the subject of the decision, Burks McGuire, was an employee of Woodward Camp in Centre County when he suffered

a severe catastrophic back injury at the age of 20. Now a resident of Missouri, he is dealing with the lifelong challenges he will face without the use of his legs.