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July 15, 2008

Zachary S. Weiss
Chairman
Workers' Compensation Board
20 Park Street
Albany, New York 12207

Dear Chairman Weiss:

As Rockland County Representatives in the State Legislature we are writing to express our concern over your decision to close the Workers' Compensation Office in New City.

With a population of over 290,000 residents, it is our belief that Rockland County merits a workers' compensation office within its borders. Furthermore, the geographic peculiarities of Rockland County make the distance to the next available offices deceiving. The Board has listed White Plains at 20 miles and New York City at 35 miles as the next closest hearing point for Rockland County residents. Unfortunately, these two offices are over either the Tappan Zee Bridge or George Washington Bridge, making the commute time and expense significantly greater than the listed mileage. We would request that any analysis of the next available office use both estimated time of commute and added expenses in the form of tolls and parking as factors into the determination.

We have been informed by the Board that New City's relatively small hearing calendar was a factor in its closure. After our discussions and research, it is our contention that this number does not accurately reflect the workload of the New City office.

The number of hearings is not reflective of the number of active cases. Rather it is reflective of the board policy to mark cases closed, which are not actually closed. Issues that are marked closed are in fact issues that can take years to resolve and are far from closed, these issues include treatment issues, rate of compensation, duration of compensation, and permanency. Even when parties are litigating issues and taking the testimony of doctors, the board considers the case "closed". The board re-closes and re-opens a case multiple times before it is resolved; resulting in an inaccurate estimate of active cases. Therefore, the actual number of open cases is dramatically skewed downward by the board's manner of tracking cases.

In addition to these factors unique to the New City office, closure of a workers' compensation office negatively affects New Yorkers who are already facing a difficult situation.

We respectfully request that you re-examine the closure of the New City office in light of the arguments made above.

Sincerely,



Thomas P. Morahan
Senator



Ellen C. Jaffee
Member of Assembly



Kenneth P. Zebrowski
Member of Assembly



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July 15, 2008

Hon. David A. Paterson
Governor, State of New York
Executive Chamber
Albany, New York 12224

Dear Governor Paterson:

We are writing as Rockland County's representatives in the State Legislature with regard to the Workers' Compensation Board's decision to close its New City office, the only office in Rockland County.

With a population of over 290,000 residents, it is our belief that Rockland County merits a workers' compensation office within its borders. Furthermore, the geographic peculiarities of Rockland County make the distance to the next available offices deceiving. The Board has listed White Plains at 20

miles and New York City at 35 miles as the next closest hearing point for Rockland County residents. Unfortunately, these two offices are over either the Tappan Zee Bridge or George Washington Bridge, making the commute time and expense significantly greater than the listed mileage. We would request that any analysis of the next available office use both estimated time of commute and added expenses in the form of tolls and parking as factors into the determination.

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In addition to these factors unique to the New City office, closure of a workers' compensation office negatively affects New Yorkers who are already facing a difficult situation.

We respectfully request that you intervene on behalf of Rockland County to prevent this injustice.

Sincerely,



Thomas P. Morahan
Senator



Ellen C. Jaffee
Member of Assembly



Kenneth P. Zebrowski
Member of Assembly

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