



# THE PLAIN DEALER



## LAW & ORDER

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#### Workers' comp class-action suit

Three Cuyahoga County companies have filed a class-action suit against the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation, arguing that the bureau's controversial "group rating" system unfairly saddles as many as 250,000 Ohio employers with hundreds of millions of dollars in excessive workplace-injury premiums each year. Linderme Tube Co., of Cleveland, Timely Advertising Specialty Co. and Corky and Lenny's, both of Woodmere, filed the suit on Tuesday on behalf of all similarly situated Ohio employers. They assert that group rating -- which awards unrealistically huge premium discounts for employers who are members of groups designed to minimize risk -- is unconstitutional because it forces companies not part of groups to subsidize the others. Bureau officials have acknowledged that group rating is flawed, that discounts are way too big and that nongroup companies pay as much as \$200 million a year in excess premiums to subsidize those of group members. Last month, the bureau's board cut the maximum discount from 90 percent to 85 percent, the first step toward reducing premium inequity. Stuart Garson, attorney for the three companies, said their first hurdle is to have all nongroup Ohio employers certified as a class for the suit.

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