

New Workers' Compensation Commissioner in Iowa

Governor Terry Branstad has appointed Joe Cortese, a West Des Moines attorney, as Iowa's Workers' Compensation commissioner. Cortese will replace Michelle "Miki" McGovern, who had been serving as the acting commissioner since September of 2014.



Cortese practices workers' compensation law at Huber, Book, Cortese & Lanz, where he is a partner. He has been with the firm, formerly Jones, Hoffman & Huber, since 1981 and has been a partner since 1985. He received his Bachelor's degree from Indiana University and earned his J.D. with honors from Drake Law School. He is a member of the Iowa State Bar Association, Polk County Bar Association, Iowa Association of Workers' Compensation Attorneys, Iowa Defense Counsel Association, Defense Research Institute and a founding member of the American Academy of ADR Attorneys.

The Workers' Compensation Commissioner is the head of the Division of Workers' Compensation which is part of Iowa Workforce Development. Workers' compensation has the responsibility of administering, regulating, and enforcing the State's workers' compensation laws. Though the workers' compensation commissioner's office cannot represent the interests of any party, the agency provides information regarding the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Law, the rights of the parties, and the procedures the parties can follow to resolve their disputes.

"With over 30 years of experience in workers' compensation, I'm confident Joe Cortese will serve as an independent and fair commissioner," Branstad said in a press release. "I appreciate Miki's service to the department and the state in the interim."

The position was vacated in August 2014 by Christopher Godfrey, who is suing Branstad over what he calls the administration's illegal attempts to force him to resign. Branstad had cut Godfrey's pay by \$40,000 after he initially refused to resign. Godfrey's lawsuit alleges discrimination, extortion and defamation by Branstad.

Originally slated to assume the role on February 16, 2015, Cortese's appointment is still pending confirmation by the Iowa Senate.

Sources:

Cortese Announcement on Iowa Workforce Development:
<http://www.iowaworkforce.org/wc/newsandupdates.htm>

Des Moines Register article about Miki McGovern's Appointment:
<http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/politics/iowa-politics-insider/2014/09/08/iowa-workers-compensation-branstad/15307999/>

Iowa Workforce Development, Division of Workers' Compensation:
<http://www.iowaworkforce.org/wc/index.html>