



On April 25, 2013, Workers Memorial Day, a commemoration was held on the steps of the State House to remember and honor those who have been killed, injured or made ill by unsafe and unhealthy workplace conditions. In the past year, 32 workers lost their lives on the job.

The names of the deceased workers were read by members of the workers' trade. The victims included: firefighters, police officers, servicemen, construction workers, truck drivers, masons, electricians, fisherman and mechanics.

This special event had distinguished speakers that included Steven Tolman, President of the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, Douglas Sheff, President-Elect, Massachusetts Bar Association, and Rich Rogers, Executive Secretary-Treasurer, Greater Boston Legal Council. They all gave moving speeches about how important it is to fight for safe jobs.

Catherine Devitt gave an emotional speech about the loss of her husband Geoffrey Almeida to Mesothelioma in 2011. She said her husband was a careful man and it is a terrible thing when people die an unnecessary death because somebody made a careless decision to use asbestos in a product.

Doug Sheff, head of the Workplace Safety Task Force, also discussed that these worker deaths are preventable, he stated, "These deaths should not happen, the MBA and I worked hard to pass bills like the Temporary Workers Right to Know Bill to protect workers and I will continue to advocate for workers' rights and create awareness throughout the community."

Steven Tolman along with Doug Sheff stressed that there is much more work to be done. Everyone can make a difference by supporting state bills that would help Massachusetts take strides in ensuring that workers can go to work and come home safe and healthy.

The bills included the Burial Benefits Bill that would increase burial benefits for families of fallen workers; right now workers compensation benefits only provide \$4,000, this bill would increase the benefits to \$8,000. The Safety Protections for Public Employees' Bill would extend safety protections to state employees who are not covered under Federal OSHA and are exempted from state safety laws. The Basic Labor Protections for Domestic Workers' Bill ensures basic labor protections because domestic workers are excluded from state and federal labor standards. This bill hopes to extend basic work protections such as protection from discrimination, workers' compensation and notice of termination.

For more information on these bills and how you can get involved with the fight for workers rights go to www.masscosh.org.