NFLPA | SB 795 Fact Sheet

California Workers' Compensation — Anti-Player Legislation

ORIGIN & SUMMARY

California's NFL teams — the Rams, Chargers, and 49ers — as well as other sports leagues (MLB, MLS, etc) are pushing **SB 795**, a bill that would significantly restrict players' access to California workers' compensation coverage. The bill originated as a **horse racing bill** but was "gut and amended" by the bill author Senator Laura Richardson (a Rams season ticket holder) into a sweeping anti-player workers' compensation bill.

WHAT THE BILL DOES

SB 795 substantially rewrites **Labor Code Section 3600.5** as it applies to professional athletes only:

- **Narrows cumulative trauma access** — Restricts conditions under which professional athletes may file workers' compensation claims for cumulative trauma and occupational disease.
- **Designated venue test** — Redefines a "California based team" to where even if your employer's place of business is California, if you, the athlete are not playing in California, it could bar recovery. This treats athletes different than all other California workers.
- **Last team liability rule** — Shifts liability to the last California team that regularly worked or hired the athlete, narrowing the universe of claims that can be pursued.
- **Applies Retroactivity** to any claim not subject to a final award or order issued before **May 11, 2026**.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO NFLPA MEMBERS

Cumulative trauma and occupational disease claims are a **principal vehicle** by which retired and current NFL players access medical care under California's workers' compensation system for career-related injury. SB 795 severely narrows that access. The retroactive reach is particularly consequential, sweeping up **active and pending claims** of NFLPA members.

NFLPA'S CORE CONCERNS

- **Workers' compensation is a constitutional right.** Article XIV, §4 of the California Constitution guarantees workers' compensation as a fundamental right. Denying professional athletes this access is an insult to every working Californian.
- **The CBA expressly entitles players to this benefit.** The Collective Bargaining Agreement specifically entitles players to workers' compensation. The funds come from the players' own share of the league's revenue sharing agreement.
- **The injury rate for NFL players is 100 percent.** NFL players perform dangerous labor for billion-dollar franchises. SB 795 shifts the financial burden of care from the team to the player.
- **Cost shifting to injured players is fundamentally unfair.** Limiting access forces injured players to self-insure at full billed amounts rather than state-mandated reduced costs — while franchise values continue to climb.
- **The bill targets athletes.** SB 795 strips rights from professional athletes while leaving the same protections in place for every other California employee.
- **The redefinitions ignore modern sports employment.** The new definitions of "California based team" and "hired" ignore how contracts are negotiated, transmitted, and accepted across state lines.
- **Retroactivity pulls the rug from current claimants.** Applying these changes to pending claims punishes workers who relied on the law as it existed when they worked and when they filed.
- **California should not abandon accountability.** California should not profit from athletes during their careers and then abandon accountability for work-related injuries.