



DOL News Brief

October 22, 2009

[Subscribe](#) | [Send Feedback](#) | [PDF Version](#)



A Woman's Nation Changes Everything

On Monday, Secretary Solis delivered the keynote remarks and participated in a Q&A session on the release of "The Shriver Report: A Woman's Nation Changes Everything." The report highlights fundamental changes to society as women shed traditional roles to take advantage of new opportunities available in the 21st century. "During these tough economic times, more and more women are becoming the primary breadwinners for their families, and it's important that we look at how we can help them succeed," said Secretary Solis.



- [Read the Secretary's Remarks](#)
- [Read The Shriver Report](#)

The Future of Retirement

Yesterday, Secretary Solis spoke at the Retirement USA Luncheon, where she highlighted the role that ERISA has played in protecting worker's pensions, and outlined her vision for EBSA to improve 401(k) plans by improving fee transparency; rooting out conflicts of interest; increasing access to unbiased investment advice; and increasing pension plan participation rates.



- [Read the Secretary's Remarks](#)

"Health Policy — The View from 200 Constitution Avenue."

Earlier this week, EBSA Assistant Secretary Phyllis Borzi spoke at the 20th Annual National Institute on Health and Welfare Benefit Plans. The meeting was convened by the American Bar Association's Joint Committee on Employee Benefits. Borzi was familiar with the law and health care professionals in attendance, having collaborated with them for many years prior to joining the DOL team. She spoke on some of today's most pressing issues, including the current health care reform process, mental health

What's Hot:

Proposed Rulemaking on Combustible Dust

The Department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration is taking the initial step in developing a standard to address the fire and explosion hazards of combustible dust. OSHA published an advance notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPR) in the Oct. 21 edition of the *Federal Register*. "It's time for workers to stop dying in preventable combustible dust explosions," said Secretary Solis. "Workplace safety is not a slogan. It's a priority clearly embodied in our laws."

- [Read the News Release](#)

\$500K in Penalties for UAE Coalcorp Associates

UAE Coalcorp Associates, operator of the Harmony Mine in Northumberland County, Pa., faces \$504,900 in civil penalties after a miner was killed during a retreat mining activity in June 2008. An accident investigation by the Department's Mine Safety and Health Administration revealed five violations. The mine operator was cited for allowing miners to travel and work under an unsupported roof, failing to provide turn posts to protect the continuous mining machine operator, directing the continuous mining machine operator to take cuts that violated the roof control plan, and failure to report hazardous conditions.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Special Study: Nevada OSHA State Performance Plan

A comprehensive evaluation of the Nevada OSHA plan revealed an urgent need for corrections in oversight to all phases of its workplace safety and health program. Failure to issue appropriate willful and repeat citations, poorly trained inspectors, and lack of follow-up to determine whether hazards were abated were among the serious concerns addressed in the report. The initial investigation ensued after federal OSHA was alerted of twenty-five work-related deaths.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Recovery Highlight: Unemployment Benefit Estimation Tool

DOL has created an Unemployment Benefit Estimation Tool which allows mortgage and housing counselors to accurately project the income homeowners may receive through unemployment compensation when processing home loan modification applications. New loan modification programs created through the Recovery Act and the new tool, will make it easier to calculate benefits over several months — giving homeowners the opportunity to qualify for a home loan modification.

- [Read the News Release](#)

parity regulations, and the popular COBRA provisions of the Recovery Act.

Prominent Latina Labor Economists Discuss "Good Jobs for Everyone"

This week DOL employees participated in discussions with two prominent Latina economists, Marie Mora from the University of Texas-Pan American, and Marie Enchautegui from the University of Puerto Rico. The events were co-hosted by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Policy and the Employment and Training Administration. Through an engaging dialogue about factors unique to the Latino community which impact labor-market outcomes, participants learned more about how the Department's agencies can benchmark and develop strategies to ensure that everyone has access to jobs that can provide economic security. These discussions provide DOL employees with an important introduction to diverse resources and tools to achieve Secretary Solis' vision — Good Jobs for Everyone!

Working Drug-Free Works!

The benefits provided by drug-free workplace programs was a hot topic around DOL this week, as the Department launched the fourth annual Drug-Free Work Week national awareness campaign. As part of this effort, Secretary Solis delivered a video message to participants attending the Employee Assistance Professionals Association's annual World Employee Assistance Program Conference in Dallas. Her remarks stressed the critical support that workplaces offer employees experiencing alcohol and drug abuse problems, and how to prevent the consequences from impacting victims' families.

- [Read the News Release](#)
-

Meeting with Tribal Leaders

On November 4, Secretary Solis will host tribal leaders at the Department in recognition of the Administration's strong commitment to Indian Country. This is part of the Department's effort to collaboratively address the economic and employment issues facing the American Indian and Alaska Native populations.

- [More Information](#)
-

International Price Program

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) [International Price Program](#) (IPP) produces the Import and Export Price Indexes, which measure the change over time in the prices of goods purchased from abroad (imports) or sold to foreign buyers (exports). Designated as a Principal Federal Economic Indicator, the Import/Export Price Indexes have a number of critical uses, including measuring and forecasting inflation; helping to assess fiscal and monetary policy; measuring U.S. industrial competitiveness;

Around DOL: Stars Focus on Ability

In observance of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, Secretary Solis hosted a panel discussion this morning featuring actor Robert David Hall and performance artist Fred Beam, along with DOL's Assistant Secretary for the Office of Disability Employment Policy



Kathy Martinez. Beam, who is deaf, recalled growing up wanting to dance like Michael Jackson saying "when you can't speak, you use body language, and there is no better expression of body language than dance." Hall, who portrays Dr. Al Robins on the popular TV show "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation" lamented that people with disabilities are often not encouraged to take risks. "I don't want to see 2,000 disabled actors tomorrow. I want to see people with disabilities given the chance to succeed or fail," said Hall.

In addition, DOL is hosting two VSA ARTs exhibits in the Frances Perkins Building: one sponsored by ODEP; the other sponsored by ETA.

- [View the VSA ARTs Slideshow](#)
 - [Read the ETA News Release](#)
 - [View the ETA Art Slideshow](#)
-

DOL in Action:

More Than \$3 Million in Grants for Massachusetts Workers

Approximately 600 workers affected by layoffs at nine companies in Massachusetts' information, manufacturing, retail and transportation industries will be assisted through a \$3,319,718 grant from DOL. The money will provide the impacted workers with access to dislocated worker services, which may include skills assessment, basic skills training, individual career counseling and occupational skills training.

- [Read the News Release](#)

TAA Allocations Announced for the Coming Year

The Department announced \$447 million for initial Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) allocations in FY 2010. The amount represents approximately 65 percent of the total funds available to states as they provide displaced workers with the opportunity to obtain the skills, resources and support needed to become re-employed.

- [Read the News Release](#)

\$24 Million to American Samoa for Tsunami Relief

Clean-up and recovery efforts for the tsunami that struck American Samoa on Sept. 29 will be made easier through a \$24,857,608 National Emergency Grant awarded by the Department. Secretary Solis expressed her concern for the victims and survivors of the recent devastation, adding that the "grant will support ongoing recovery efforts and help American Samoans put their lives back together."

- [Read the News Release](#)
-

National News:

VP Unveils Report Focused on Green Jobs and Energy Savings for Middle Class

Vice President Biden was joined by several Cabinet

and deflating foreign trade statistics.

- [Read this month's IPP News Release](#)

Upcoming Deadlines & Events

OFCCP — AAP Development & Preparing for a Desk Audit

- [October 27 — Philadelphia, PA](#)

OFCCP — Compliance Assistance Seminar

- [October 27 — Chicago, IL](#)
- [October 27 — Minneapolis, MN](#)
- [October 28 — Detroit, MI](#)

OFCCP — ARRA Compliance Assistance Seminar for Construction Contractors

- [October 27 — Mountainside, NJ](#)

OSHA — Update for Disaster Site Worker Train-the-Trainer Course

- [October 24 — Orlando, FL](#)

Women's Bureau: What Women Need to Know

- [November 7 — Freehold, NJ](#)

Women's Bureau: Rising to the Challenge

A conference providing opportunities to prepare women for successfully dealing with the current economic climate.

- [October 23 — Farmington Hills, MI](#)



members, including DOL's Secretary Solis to unveil [Recovery Through Retrofit](#), a report detailing recommendations and actions for expanding green job opportunities and making homes more energy efficient. Despite the real energy cost savings and environmental benefits associated with improving home energy efficiency, a lack of access to information, financing, and skilled workers has prevented a self-sustaining retrofit market from forming. The report details how to overcome these barriers and to leverage Recovery Act funding to help ensure that the energy efficiency market will thrive long after the Recovery Act money is fully spent.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Spotlight on States: Oregon

Laid-off RV Workers Aided by NEG Grant

DOL announced \$3,850,268 in grants to assist 1,430 workers in the state of Oregon affected by layoffs from Monaco Coach Corp. In the past year, the recreational vehicle manufacturing industry has experienced several layoffs within Oregon and this grant will provide dislocated workers with supportive services — such as dependent care and transportation assistance — in addition to the full array of training and employment-related services.

- [Read the News Release](#)

DOL Announces \$1.4 Million to Help with Manufacturing Layoffs

Oregon will receive an additional \$1,412,920 grant to assist approximately 328 workers in the state affected by layoffs from Cessna Aircraft Co. "This grant will provide re-employment services vital to ensuring these workers re-enter the workforce as quickly as possible," said Secretary Solis.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Opportunities are Open: You Can Count On It!

Before there was a U.S. Department of Labor... there was the Bureau of Labor Statistics. BLS seeks [economists](#), [mathematical statisticians](#), and [information technology specialists](#) to ensure America's workers count! Explore the BLS opportunities listed below or [view all](#) the rewarding DOL positions.

1. Position in Washington, DC Metro Area
[Information Technology Specialist \(NETWORK/SYSADMIN\) — Grade 13](#)
DE-10-BLS-OT-010
Close: 11/04/2009
2. Position in Washington, DC
[Associate Commissioner for Field Operations — Grade ES99](#)
DOL-SES-BLS-09-06
Close: 10/27/2009
3. Multiple Positions in Denver, CO
[Economic Assistant — Grade 07](#)
DE-10-DAL-BLS-0009
Close: 11/05/2009

[Previous Issues](#) | [Follow us on Twitter](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Send Feedback](#) | [Unsubscribe](#)