



DOL News Brief

February 4, 2010

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Solis Testifies on Her First Year



On Wednesday, Secretary Solis testified before the House Education and Labor Committee on first year successes. She also outlined priorities for the

Department as it works to strengthen the economy and improve the lives of American workers. "While I came to lead the Department of Labor at a tumultuous and challenging time, I know that we have already made a real difference in the lives of America's workers and their families," she told the Committee. "We successfully implemented the Recovery Act and have seen how these investments have saved and created jobs in communities across the country."

- [Read the Secretary's Testimony](#)
- View the Testimony Webcast
- [View the Slideshow](#)

DOL Hosts First Planning Session for the G20 Meeting

On January 25 and 26 Deputy Undersecretary for the Department's Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB) Sandra Polaski hosted top international labor policy officials from the



G20 nations. ILAB convened the group to lay the groundwork for the upcoming G20 Labor and Employment Ministers' meeting to be led by Secretary Solis at the Frances Perkins Building later this spring. Officials from every G20 country attended and forged a consensus on how to proceed in the future.

- [View the Slideshow](#)

Job Corps Provides Relief to Haitian Orphans

On January 23 and 24, students and staff members from the Pittsburgh Job Corps

What's Hot: 1,500+ Join Budget Conversation

On Monday, Secretary Solis and agency heads released the FY 2011 Budget for the Department of Labor via live Web chat with more than 1,500 participants. The Secretary's budget requests a total of \$117 billion and asks for 358 more employees. As the Secretary said in her video and Web chat,



"My goals are straightforward. Protect workers rights in the workplace; expand our role in enforcing those rights — especially in our agreements with our trading partners; ensure that all Americans are aware of and have access to our programs, so that they have an opportunity to get and keep future jobs. And, most important, let the public see what we're doing...transparency."

- [Visit the Budget Site](#)
- [View the Slideshow](#)

DOL Working For You

Edison Job Corps Proves Perfect for Computer Whiz Kid

The Edison, N.J., Job Corps Academy proved perfect for Alex Eisenhauer — literally.

Alex excelled at the Job Corps' computer training courses, but surprised himself in achieving a perfect score on a Microsoft Word certification test. That result led to him to represent the United States in a worldwide competition, where he placed 7th.

Alex, who hopes to someday work for the federal government, will graduate from Edison next March with a degree and certification in computer programs, but has also started a community college training program. Prior to Edison, Alex was



unemployed for over a year and dependent on his parents for help. Now, Alex said Job Corps has supplied him "with the resources to help me along the way" and succeed.

Around DOL

DOL Celebrates Black History Month

Before there was Mary Kay or Max Factor, even before the "Avon Lady". . . there was Madam C.J. Walker. In celebration of Black History Month 2010, Secretary Solis hosted an enlightening one-on-one conversation with



Center provided aide to 14 Haitian orphans now residing at Holy Family Institute in Pittsburgh following the recent earthquake

that devastated their country. Nancy Pierre, Tanya Schnovel, Anjewel Johnson, Nina Rice, Sade Franklin, Tommy Cooper and Rakim Parrish, who are in the Occupational Health Program and working towards their certified nursing assistant certification, volunteered six-hour shifts for two days to provide childcare to the orphans. From feeding and bathing to playing games with the children, who ranged from infant to elementary school age, these students and the Job Corps staff members took on full care giving of the Haitian children.

Solis Meets with Mexican Ambassador

Secretary Solis and Mexican Ambassador Arturo Sarukhan held productive discussions on February 2 about renewing and enhancing the cooperation between



DOL agencies and the Mexican Embassy and its consulates. They also discussed the success of Labor Rights Week events in September 2009, in Los Angeles and other cities. The effort brought together the Embassy of Mexico, the Department, local authorities, unions, religious groups, and community based organizations with the common goal of better informing workers from Mexico and elsewhere of their rights.

Top-Rated Job Sites Revealed

More than 16,000 job seekers and others reviewed and recommended more than 600 online tools during the Tools for America's Job Seekers Challenge. The public's recommendations have been tallied, and the top-rated sites are now available! Check out the challenge Web page to access all of the sites that joined in during the last few months. This list will be maintained and will serve as a lasting resource for job seekers.

- [Read the News Release](#)
- [View the Top-Rated Sites](#)
- [Check Out the Challenge Web Site](#)

Experts Shed Light on Workplace Issues in the LGBT Community

As part of a continuing



A'Lelia Bundles, great-great granddaughter of Madam C.J. Walker, and author of the book "On Her Own Ground: The Life and Times of

Madam C.J. Walker." Later students from the Alice Deal Middle School choir sang a few selections, including "Lift Every Voice and Sing." This was the first of several events at the Department throughout the month to recognize, celebrate, honor, learn and live Black History.

- [View the Slideshow](#)
- [View the Poster](#)

Assistant Secretary Borzi Addresses Lifetime Annuities

In her address to the National Institute on Retirement Security, Assistant Secretary for the Employee Benefits Security Administration Phyllis Borzi unveiled the U.S. Departments of Labor and the Treasury's request for information (RFI) on use of annuities to provide a stream of income after retirement through lifetime annuities or other arrangements. She emphasized that the department hopes to be overwhelmed with public comments. Borzi called the initiative "particularly important given the shift from defined benefit plans that offer employees lifetime annuities to 401(k) and other defined contribution plans that typically distribute retirement savings in a lump sum payment."



- [Read the News Release](#)
- [Read the RFI](#)

New Members Appointed to ERISA Advisory Council

Secretary Solis recently announced that five new members and a new leadership were appointed for the 2010 Advisory Council on Employee Welfare and Pension Benefit Plans. "We appreciate the council members' contribution of time and expertise in working on issues that affect the retirement and health benefits of America's workers," said Solis. The 15-member council provides advice on policies and regulations affecting employee benefit plans governed by the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA). To ensure continuity within the committee, members serve for staggered three-year terms.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Parity in Treatment of Mental, Substance Use Disorders

The Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and the Treasury jointly issued new rules providing parity for consumers enrolled in group health plans who need treatment for mental health or substance use disorders. The regulations clarify many important aspects of the law's new requirements for group health plans (including parity for financial requirements and treatment limitations, and extension of the rules to substance use disorder benefits).

- [Read the News Release](#)

DOL in Action



series by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Policy, two experts in lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) demographics and

economics presented the state of the LGBT workforce to employees from the Department and other federal agencies last week. Dr. Gary Gates, a Senior Research Fellow at the UCLA School of Law and Dr. Lee Badgett, Research Director at the UCLA Williams Institute presented a nuanced picture of the employment challenges faced by the LGBT community and their families, as well as ways the federal government can leverage its resources to eliminate certain barriers. For more information, or to be added to Department of Labor's LGBT outreach list contact Jeremy Bishop at 202-693-6452 or bishop.jeremy@dol.gov.

- [View the Slideshow](#)

Upcoming Deadlines & Events

EBSA — Voluntary Fiduciary Correction Program Workshop

- [February 17, 2010, A.M. — Boise, ID](#)
- [February 17, 2010, P.M. — Boise, ID](#)

MSHA — Annual Arkansas Mine Safety and Health Conference

- [February 4-5, 2010 — Hot Springs, AR](#)

MSHA — Rules to Live By

- [February 11, 2010 — Austin, TX](#)
- [February 12, 2010 — Charleston, WV](#)

ODEP — We're Listening

- [February 11, 2010 — Chicago, IL](#)
- [February 16, 2010 — Berkeley, CA](#)

OFCCP — AAP Development and Preparing for a Desk Audit

- [February 9, 2010 — Philadelphia, PA](#)
- [February 11, 2010 — Baltimore, MD](#)

OFCCP — ARRA Compliance Assistance Seminar

- [February 17, 2010 — Boston, MA](#)

OFCCP — Compliance Assistance Seminar for Construction Contractors

- [February 5, 2010 — Richmond, VA](#)

DOL Recovers More Than \$1 Million for Workers of Pilgrim's Pride

The Department of Labor has announced that the filing of a consent judgment against Pilgrim's Pride Corp. has resulted in recovering more than \$1 million for 798 processing workers in Dallas. The company failed to pay these workers for time spent "donning and doffing," or putting on and taking off work-related gear.

- [Read the News Release](#)

ALJ Rules Bank of America Guilty of Discriminatory Hiring Practices

A protracted case that started with an investigation by the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) has resulted in an administrative law judge's recommended ruling that Bank of America discriminated against African-American job applicants for entry level positions in Charlotte, N.C. "The Labor Department is committed to ensuring that all workers — including African Americans — are treated fairly by federal contractors in decisions concerning hiring, promotion and compensation," said OFCCP Director Patricia A. Shiu. "Further, contractors cannot use litigation as a means to obstruct OFCCP's ability to conduct its authorized investigations and pursue relief for victims of discrimination."

- [Read the News Release](#)

More Funding to Help Older Workers

On January 29, the Department announced \$225 million in additional funding for the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) in fiscal year 2010. SCSEP is a community service and work-based training program for older workers providing part-time, community service-based job training for unemployed, low-income individuals age 55 or older. Through this program, older workers have access to SCSEP services as well as other employment assistance available through the workforce investment system.

- [Read the News Release](#)

MSHA Rules to Live By

The Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) is taking a new safety message on the road. Joseph A. Main, MSHA's assistant secretary, will formally kick off the "Rules to Live By" initiative Feb. 11 in Austin, Texas and Feb. 12 in Charleston, W.Va. The outreach and enforcement program is designed to strengthen efforts to prevent mining fatalities by focusing on the most common conditions, practices, and violations that contributed to mining deaths from 2000-2008.

- [Read the News Release](#)

MSHA Seeks Feedback from Mining Community

The rise in high-technology underground mining techniques hasn't come without a cost. Since 1983, 31 miners have been killed in underground mines in accidents involving remote-controlled continuous mining machines. Proximity detection systems — those that can detect the presence of personnel or equipment and are programmed to send warning signals and stop machine movement — have been around awhile, but their use on mobile equipment in underground mines is a fairly new concept. The Mine Safety and Health Administration is seeking feedback from the mining community to determine whether the use of these systems would reduce pinning and crushing injuries and fatalities in underground mines.

- [Read the News Release](#)
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- [February 5, 2010 — Philadelphia, PA](#)
- [February 10, 2010 — Portland, OR](#)
- [February 10, 2010 — Richmond, VA](#)

OFCCP — Compliance Assistance Meeting

- [February 15, 2010 — Newport, RI](#)
- [February 17, 2010 — Boston, MA](#)

OFCCP — Everything you Want to Know about Adverse Impact Analysis

- [February 17, 2010 — Houston, TX](#)

OFCCP — The Nuts and Bolts of Construction Compliance Evaluations

- [February 17, 2010 — Houston, TX](#)

OFCCP — Town Hall Meeting

- [February 4-5, 2010 — Chicago, IL](#)

OLMS — Compliance Assistance Seminar

- [February 17, 2010 — Springfield, IL](#)

OSHA — OSHA Listens

- [February 10, 2010 — Washington, DC](#)

Follow USDOL on

- Statement by Solicitor of Labor M. Patricia Smith regarding ongoing investigation of Upper Big Branch Mine explo... <http://bit.ly/gyS3YZ> 4 days ago
- Mining deaths rise in 2010 [01/13/2011] <http://bit.ly/g77s3S> 4 days ago

Recovery Highlight: UI Modernization Funds

More than \$4 billion in unemployment insurance modernization funding made available through the Recovery Act has been left unclaimed. The Department of Labor is calling on states to apply! These funds can be used to pay unemployment insurance benefits, as well as other defined purposes if appropriated by state legislatures. Secretary Solis noted that while many states have updated their laws, "Those states that have not yet applied for funding should take this opportunity to assist the millions of individuals who are out of work through no fault of their own and who are in great need of assistance."

- [Read the News Release](#)
- [View the UI Funding Chart](#)

Spotlight on States: Maine

DOL announced an \$880,000 grant to provide an estimated 800 jobless workers in Maine with partial premium payments for health insurance coverage. The grant will be used to make "gap filler" payments for unemployed individuals who are receiving Trade Adjustment Assistance benefits and are eligible for the Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC) program. These payments cover the gap period, or the time it takes to complete Internal Revenue Service enrollment, processing and first payments under the HCTC program.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Opportunities are Open: Enforcement

Like fighting crime? You may be surprised to learn that the Department of Labor is one of the largest enforcement agencies in the federal government. Every day we are working to protect the jobs of working families, make sure their jobs are safe, and ensure that they receive the compensation that they deserve. Check out the three enforcement opportunities below or [view all](#) the exciting and rewarding opportunities.

1. Position in Washington DC Metro Area
[Wage and Hour Specialist — GS-1849-13/13](#)
DE-10-ESA-WH-27
Close: 02/09/2010
2. Position in Washington, DC
[Industrial Hygienist — GS-0690-11/13](#)
DE-10-OSHA-38
Close: 02/09/2010
3. Position in Los Angeles, CA
[Supervisory Criminal Investigator — GS-1811-14/14](#)
MS-10-SF-OLMS-022
Close: 02/05/2010

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