



DOL News Brief

March 25, 2010

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



Senate Appropriators Hear from Solis on FY2011 Budget



On Tuesday, Secretary Solis testified before the U.S. Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, and Education. She outlined the department's fiscal

year 2011 budget and responded to questions from Chairman Tom Harkin (Iowa), Vice Chairman Thad Cochran (Mississippi), and other members of the Subcommittee. Solis' testimony focused on putting people back to work, preparing Americans for the jobs of the future, protecting workers' rights and safety, and ensuring transparency and accountability. She also discussed DOL's continuing efforts in a wide range of agencies, including ETA, VETS, ODEP, ILAB and the Women's Bureau. Later in the week, Assistant Secretaries for the Employment and Training Administration and the Veterans' Employment and Training Service, Jane Oates and Ray Jefferson, delivered testimony in support of funding for their respective agencies. (The Assistant Secretaries' hearings were originally scheduled for March 11.)

- [Read the Secretary's Testimony](#)
- [Watch the Video](#)
- [View the Slideshow](#)
- [Read Oates' Testimony](#)
- [Read Jefferson's Testimony](#)

At the Table: WB and Solis Host Women in Trades

On Wednesday, Secretary Solis and Sara Manzano-Diaz, director of the Women's Bureau, hosted a roundtable with women in trades to enhance



communication and share useful strategies and ideas on women's entrance and advancement in trade occupations. The conversation included

What's Hot

Celebrating 40 Years of Landmark Mine Health and Safety Legislation



Nearly 250 people gathered in the Labor Department's Great Hall on Tuesday, March 23, to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act. This legislation was born out of a terrible disaster that took place on Nov. 20, 1968, at Consolidation Coal's No. 9 mine in Farmington, West Va. taking the lives of 78 miners. Joseph A. Main, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health and master of ceremonies, characterized the event as a cautious celebration and solemn remembrance. "Out of tragedy, a strong law was born," said Main. "We celebrate the law, we rejoice in the results — and we mourn those who died to make it possible." ([more...](#))

- [Watch the Webcast](#)
- [View the Slideshow](#)

Additional Funding for Programs Preparing Ex-offenders for Careers

Helping ex-offenders gain the career skills they need to find good jobs is an important part of helping them gain a firm footing in their communities following incarceration. This week the Department provided \$12 million in additional funding to 24 organizations already operating programs through the Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Initiative. The funding allows programs to operate for a fifth year to continue providing a variety of services to ex-offenders (job training, on-the-job training, work experience, basic skills remediation, counseling, case management and mentoring).

- [Read the News Release](#)

National News

This is What Change Looks Like!

On Tuesday afternoon, Secretary Solis joined President Obama, Vice President Biden, and several of her colleagues from the Cabinet at a forum held in the U.S. Department of Interior. The event followed the President's signing of the historic Health Care Reform law. Among other things, the new law will bring coverage to 32 million Americans, make health insurance



issues related to recruitment, training and on-the-job issues, and barriers to retention. As Solis and Manzano-Diaz voiced during the discussion, this was the first of many discussions with the long-term goal of increasing participation of women in these high-growth, high-wage fields.

- [View the Slideshow](#)

Michaels at NHCA



Along with being the keynote speaker, Dr. David Michaels, assistant secretary for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), also swore in the new

board of directors for the National Hispanic Construction Association (NHCA) on Tuesday in Washington, D.C. The association provides resources to ensure the continued education, professional and technical progress of its members and promote the economic growth, advancement and equal participation of Hispanic-owned construction businesses. “Every successful workplace with low rates of worker injuries and illnesses has a comprehensive Safety and Health Management System in which management and workers are committed as equal partners in workplace safety and health,” said Michaels. “Together they identify problems, agree on solutions, set goals, train together, and pursue continuous improvement.”

Atlanta's DOL Observed Women's History Month with 'Fireside Chat'

In observance of Women's History Month, the Department's Women's Bureau and the YWCA of Greater Atlanta partnered to co-sponsor a “fireside chat,” themed “Our Story is Our Strength,” featuring prominent women in the community. These extraordinary women discussed challenges that they faced along the way — “The Story Behind the Story” — and how they overcame barriers with courage, persistence and a commitment to service. Young girls in the YWCA's Teen Girls in Technology Program depicted and introduced the featured panelists.

Philadelphia Region Raises Nearly \$700 for Haitian Victims

DOL agencies in the Philadelphia region banded together to support Haitian relief efforts by participating in the Helping Haiti One Cent at a Time campaign, a penny drive held during the month of February. A total of \$682 was collected and donated to the American Red Cross Southeastern Pennsylvania Chapter. To date, the American Red Cross has provided food for more than one million people



affordable for middle class families and small businesses, and reduce the U.S. deficit by more than \$100 billion in the first decade alone. Solis told the crowd “We are here because Americans with health care challenges asked us not to give up, and we remained committed to seeing this through. We came this far on the passion—and with boots on the ground—of those who understood how critical it was for this measure to pass. And, we will shape a better future because of it. As President Obama said: ‘This...is what change looks like’.”

- [Read the Secretary's Statement](#)
- [More details on the Health Care Reform law](#)

Around DOL

What Are YOU Saying?



On Thursday, the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) kicked off a series of Web chats that the Labor Department is hosting to gather input on its strategic plan for FY 2010-2016. Stakeholders within the mining community were invited to comment on MSHA's direction and goals. For nearly an hour, Assistant Secretary Joseph Main fielded

questions and comments on a variety of topics, including MSHA's emphasis on enforcement, consistency in mine inspections, compliance assistance, the existing backlog in contested citations, and the regulatory agenda. MSHA's Webchat was followed by one with leaders from the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP), who covered an equally broad array of issues—from OWCP policies and procedures to Federal Employees' Compensation Act wage loss claims to Division of Federal Employees' Compensation case management.

- [Read the Transcript of MSHA's Web Chat](#)
- [Read the Transcript of OWCP's Web Chat](#)
- [View the Chat Schedule](#)
- [View the Slideshow](#)

DOL Working For You

Women's Bureau Program Leads to Scientific Career Pursuit

The Women's Bureau's Women in Nanotechnology (WIN) program piqued Lacy Simons' interest in scientific engineering on a very small scale. Now, the Illinois native is poised to help develop future energy and environmental applications from nanotechnology.



Simons, a single mother who works two jobs, said her knowledge of nanotechnology was expanded through WIN, leading her to pursue a dual degree at Loyola University in Bio-Physics and Molecular Biology, with a possible Ph.D. in medicinal chemistry in the offing. Through her WIN program participation, she gained an internship at Argonne National Laboratory, one of America's leading federally-funded research centers.

Simons praised the WIN program for helping to bring together a community of women to learn about nanotechnology. “Now that we understand what it is, we are pursuing it as a career,” she added.

and distributed 40 million liters of water in Haiti.

OSHA Offering Free Construction Safety and Health Training

DOL's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is offering free training to employers in South Alabama to prevent construction-related injuries and illnesses on April 1 at the 5th Annual Gulf Coast Safety Conference at the Gulf State Fairgrounds in Mobile, Ala. The one-day conference is designed to assist contractors, workers and others interested in obtaining construction safety and health information. Exhibitors will offer products and services that support construction workplace safety and health programs. Meals and beverages, in addition to training, will be provided at no cost.

- [Register for the Training](#)

Solis's West Coast Whirlwind



Last week, Secretary Solis traveled home to California for a number of events. Her first stop was a tour of the Youth Policy Institute in Hollywood, a DOL grantee which received

a \$3.6 million grant to provide work training opportunities in the health care sector. Later, Solis spoke at the Chicana Service Action Center's "Celebrating the Legacy of Latina Leadership & Advancing a Vision for Comprehensive Change" symposium. She was later honored by the East Los Angeles' Women's Center Gala with the Mujeres de Paz Award for her dedication to improving the lives of women and families. She later addressed 200 members of the California Faculty Association, reminding them to "continue inspiring the next generation of leaders."

- [View the Slideshow](#)

Upcoming Deadlines & Events

MSHA — Mine Inspector Job Fair

- [April 10, 2010 — Ina, IL](#)
- [April 11, 2010 — Evansville, IN](#)

OFCCP — AAP Development and Implementation

- [March 31, 2010 — Orange, CA](#)
- [April 10, 2010 — Baltimore, MD](#)

OFCCP — Affirmative Action Plan (AAP) Workshop

- [April 7, 2010 — Pittsburgh, PA](#)

OFCCP — ARRA Webinar for Federal and Federally-Assisted Construction Contractors

News You Can Use

COBRA on Notice

The Department released updated model notices that employers and group health plans can use to notify individuals about the availability of the COBRA continuation coverage premium reductions through March 31, 2010. "The new eligibility criteria make it possible for many more to qualify for continuation health coverage," said Phyllis C. Borzi, assistant secretary of the Employee Benefits Security Administration.

- [Read the News Release](#)

DOL in Action

Labor Certifies 14,000 Workers in 20 States as Eligible to Apply for TAA

This week, the Department announced that approximately 14,000 workers from companies in 20 states are eligible to apply for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA). "Through the Trade Adjustment Assistance program, the U.S. Department of Labor is taking aggressive steps to help displaced workers gain access to the types of job training and placement services that will lead them to permanent good jobs in local industries," said Secretary Solis. Among those certified were 7,200 workers from the automotive industry. Dr. Ed Montgomery, executive director of the White House Council on Automotive Communities and Workers, highlighted the TAA certifications as one more tool the federal government is using to help auto communities. "President Obama and this entire administration are committed to a coordinated federal response that will soften the blow of the current downturn and speed the economic recovery for communities across the country affected by auto industry restructuring and other mass industrial layoffs," he said.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Protecting Health Benefits of Ford Retirees

The Department's Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) granted an exemption allowing Ford Motor Co. to transfer company securities to a voluntary employees' beneficiary association (VEBA) trust that funds a new health plan to provide health benefits for the company's retirees. The new plan would cover in excess of 285,000 retirees and their dependents, and a small number of active employees.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Recovery Highlights

More than \$1.1 Million for Workers Laid-off from Joe's Sports in Oregon

Workers laid-off from Joe's Sports, Outdoor, Auto/Truck and More in Wilsonville, Ore., will now be able to access training and employment services through a National Emergency Grant of more than \$1.1 million by the Recovery Act. The grant will serve approximately 100 workers who lost their jobs in retail stores, distribution centers, and corporate offices when the company closed. The State of Oregon has identified potential job growth in fields including health care, human resources and criminal justice.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Grant to Help San Joaquin Valley Workers

The Department also awarded more than \$8 million in Recovery Act funds to assist workers who have lost their jobs in California's San Joaquin Valley.

- [March 30, 2010 — Webinar](#)

OFCCP — Compliance Seminar

- [April 8, 2010 — Los Angeles, CA](#)

OFCCP — Compliance Assistance for Supply and Service Contractors

- [March 26, 2010 — Richmond, VA](#)

OFCCP — Ready, Set, Go for Construction Contractors Webinar

- [April 2, 2010 — Portland, OR](#)
- [April 9, 2010 — Richmond, VA](#)

OSHA — Chemical Process Safety Update: Are You Prepared?

- [March 26, 2010 — Cuyahoga Heights, OH](#)

OSHA — "Green Jobs: Safety & Health Outlook for Workers and Small Employers" Forum

- [April 1, 2010 — Washington, DC](#)

OSHA — Hazard Communication Standard Proposal Public Hearing

- [March 31, 2010 — Pittsburgh, PA](#)

WB — Oregon Women Veterans Conference 2010

- [March 26, 2010 — Canyonville, OR](#)

Follow USDOL on

- Filmed a PSA with the @SDPadres Adrian Gonzalez this AM in AZ. Focus is on safety & rights of Latino workers. <http://twitpic.com/1au2yk> about 20 hours ago

The Regional Economic Impact National Emergency Grant will help workers prepare for careers in agribusiness, renewable energy, supply chain logistics, health care and advanced manufacturing. The funding was made available in response to widespread layoffs resulting from the recent economic downturn, and a three-year drought that has worsened the situation.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Washington State Workers Get Help with Health Insurance Payments

Thanks to Recovery Act funding, more than \$4.8 million is available to approximately 1,500 Washington State workers to help them pay for health insurance coverage following layoffs. Individuals who are unemployed and receiving Trade Adjustment Assistance benefits are eligible to receive assistance through the Health Coverage Tax Credit program. Eligible individuals can receive 80 percent of premium costs for qualified health insurance programs.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Spotlight on States: Illinois

New Outreach Program to Enhance Safety and Health for Illinois

This week, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health (OSHA) Dr. David Michaels welcomed Illinois into a select group of states that provide health and safety protection for public workers excluded from federal OSHA coverage. After approving Illinois as a State Plan, OSHA awarded \$1.5 million in federal matching grants to the Illinois Department of Labor. The Occupational Safety and Health Act allows states and territories to establish plans that only cover state and local government employees -- workers who are excluded from federal OSHA coverage. This new federal funding will give Illinois added resources to protect more than one million public employees—including school teachers, state and local government employees, and employees in high-risk professions, such as police officers, firefighters and transportation workers.

- [More Information](#)

Opportunities are Open: Connecticut

Start an exciting career with DOL in Connecticut! The Constitution State may be small, but there are big opportunities at DOL in CT. Explore the three CT positions below or [view all](#) the rewarding openings at DOL.

1. Positions in CT and other locations
[Wage & Hour Technician \(Office Automation\) — GS-1802-07/07](#)
DE-10-NY-WHD-51
Close: 03/30/2010
2. Positions in CT and other locations
[Economist — GS-0110-07](#)
WA-295873-AH
Close: 11/08/2010
3. Positions in CT and other locations
[Wage & Hour Assistant \(Office Automation\) \(CLR\) — GS-1802-05/05](#)
DE-10-NY-WHD-54
Close: 03/31/2010

