



DOL News Brief

July 22, 2010

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Immigration: The Labor Perspective

During an hour long Webcast on Monday, Secretary Solis and AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka discussed the link between labor and immigration, while outlining a path to comprehensive immigration reform. The two broached the discussion from a worker rights perspective. They also offered insights into the current immigration system, the exploitation of immigrant workers, and the adverse impact that our broken immigration system is having on wages and workplace standards across America. Trumka and Solis then turned their attention to stepped up restrictions on border crossings and the recently passed Arizona immigration law. Last, but not least, they fielded viewer questions and urged those watching the Webcast to take an active role in this important debate.



- [View the Webcast](#)

ODEP's Martinez Praises WRP



Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) Assistant Secretary Kathleen Martinez spoke at the Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP)

Summer Reception and Awards Ceremony at the Department of Veterans Affairs on Wednesday. Martinez highlighted the importance of the collaborative relationship between DOL and the Department of Defense as well as other agencies for the continued success of WRP. She proudly announced that more than 500 students and recent graduates with disabilities were hired this year in 15 agencies nationwide. She concluded by introducing a PSA created by the Campaign for Disability Employment, "This message is simple — it's what those of us with disabilities CAN do in the workplace that counts."

- [View the Slideshow](#)

What's Hot

Solis Unveils Pay Equity and Workplace Flexibility Initiatives

"Pay equity is a core family issue," Secretary Solis said announcing department initiatives to end wage discrimination. "More money in a woman's paycheck means a working family not having to choose between paying the mortgage and buying groceries." Solis also unveiled efforts by DOL to enhance work/life balance data and public education. Both announcements were made in conjunction with the White House Middle Class Task Force forum on Tuesday. Proposed initiatives include strategic enforcement of pay discrimination, a supplement to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' American Time Use Survey, as well as launching a series of "National Dialogue on Workplace Flexibility" forums.



- [Read the Secretary's Remarks](#)
- [Read the News Release](#)
- [Read the President's Statement](#)
- [Read the Middle Class Task Force Release](#)

OFCCP Rule Seeks to Improve Hiring of People with Disabilities

On the eve of the 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, a proposed rule to federal contracting law was announced by the Office of Federal Contract Compliance (OFCCP). If enacted it would increase employment prospects for people with disabilities. The Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeks public comment on expanding affirmative action and nondiscrimination obligations of contractors and subcontractors who receive contracts from the federal government. OFCCP Director Patricia A. Shiu said her agency is reexamining its affirmative action regulations so that people with disabilities can be assured that federal contractors are proactively seeking these individuals out for employment.

- [Read the News Release](#)

National News

Helping Those Hit Hardest by the Recession

Since June 2, more than 2.5 million Americans who are looking for work have been cut off from unemployment assistance. On Thursday Congress passed a six-month extension of emergency jobless benefits for the long-term unemployed. In a piece that ran on the DOL Blog and Huffington Post immediately after the 272 to 152 vote in the House chamber (the Senate approved the measure by a nearly-party line vote of 59 to 39 on Wednesday), Secretary Solis said, "The good news is that later today, the president is expected to sign an extension of the unemployment benefits, providing a modest level of help to millions of Americans who lost income

- [View the PSA](#)

Green Scene: Greening the American Economy

The Recovery Act's unprecedented investments to jumpstart the development of renewable energy and clean technologies were underscored on Tuesday by Secretary Solis and other White House officials. The group spoke with business owners and state and local government leaders about the greening of the American economy. "The Recovery Act constituted an unprecedented and historic investment in the clean energy economy," said Secretary Solis. "And all of these investments will lead to the industries of the future, help put America back in the lead of the global clean energy economy, and create millions of jobs over time."

- [Read the Secretary's Remarks](#)
- [Read the White House Blog Post](#)

AAPI Working Group Meeting



Earlier this week Secretary Solis participated in the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) Interagency

Working Group Meeting. This working group will tackle the problems the AAPI community is facing, from health to the most recent challenges in the Gulf Coast oil spill. Solis highlighted the work the department is doing to help AAPI workers in the Gulf Coast, noting that, "It is home to a large population of Southeast Asian immigrants and we are working with them to ensure they are working in safe conditions and have opportunities for employment. These communities have so many needs and they need to know that we are here to help."

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

Improving Fee Transparency for Retirement Plans

Employee Benefits Security Administration Assistant Secretary Phyllis Borzi unveiled an interim final regulation last Thursday. This will improve transparency for fiduciaries of 401(k) and other retirement plans. It will also provide assistance to fiduciaries in determining both the fairness of compensation paid to plan service providers and any conflicts of interest that may impact a service provider's performance under a service contract or arrangement. "This regulation

because of the GOP's obstruction. I know that for these families, it couldn't come soon enough. But it's a shame that a partisan agenda held up these benefits for families, friends and neighbors in need." Solis, who has traveled across the nation and spoken directly with workers about the challenges they face in the current economic climate, added that there are five Americans looking for every existing job opening, and extending UI benefits is the least we can do to help these workers and their families keep food on the table.

- [Read the Secretary's Blog Post](#)
- [See the Breakdown of the Senate Vote](#)
- [See the Breakdown of the House Vote](#)

DOL Working For You

EBSA Advisor Uncovers Millions in Unpaid Bills



When one man's dental and medical bills continually went unpaid, benefits advisor Cindy Saba of the Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) dug deeper into his case. The results of her sleuthing lead to the eventual recovery of more than \$2 million in claims for 239 individuals. They all worked for an Illinois lumber and supply company which failed to adequately self fund its health plan. The employer said the tough economy caused the plan to go unfunded for about a year. But Saba emphasized "people were put in jeopardy" by its decision and a remedy was needed immediately. The company resolved the situation within a few months. The eight-year EBSA employee said of her action, "This is another example of how hard we work in this agency to help people."

International Scene

Plans to Eliminate Child Labor in West Africa

Deputy Undersecretary Sandra Polaski and Bureau of International Affairs (ILAB) staff convened a working meeting July 13-14 to discuss eliminating child labor in West Africa. The two-day meeting centered on the strategies and resources needed to fully implement the Harkin-Engel Protocol, an initiative focused on the industry responsible



for West Africa's worst forms of child labor – cocoa production. The meeting included representatives from the governments of Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana, the international cocoa industry, the office of Senator Tom Harkin, and the office Congressman Eliot Engel.

- [View the Slideshow](#)

Protecting Child Labor Around the World

DOL's Bureau of International Labor Affairs published a final list of products that federal contractors must certify are not produced with forced or indentured child labor in Tuesday's Federal Register. This announcement follows an initial determination setting forth a list of 29 products in 21 countries that were believed to have been mined, produced or manufactured by forced or indentured child labor.

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

will give fiduciaries valuable information about compensation and revenue sharing, and the disclosure of this information will benefit millions of participants and their families," added Secretary Solis.

- [Read the News Release](#)
- [Read the Final Rule](#)
- [Attend a Workshop](#)

Hallmark Tells Congress OWCP Meeting Needs of Injured Workers

The Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP) "is meeting the needs of injured workers in high-risk occupations," particularly those deployed in war zones, Director Shelby Hallmark told a House Oversight and Government Reform subcommittee hearing on the Federal Employees' Compensation Act. OWCP is promptly adjudicating claims, paying medical bills and providing assistance in returning injured workers to gainful employment once that is medically possible, Hallmark said. He also told the members Secretary Solis has proposed the creation of POWER — "Protecting Our Workers, Ensuring Re-Employment" — designed to improve workplace safety and reduce workplace injuries.

- [Read Hallmark's Remarks](#)

"Right Kind of Workplace Culture"

Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Jordan Barab spoke last week to the Associated General Contractors (AGC) of America meeting in Cincinnati. Barab congratulated the AGC for fostering "the right kind of workplace culture" through its safety awards program which encourages management and employee involvement. He also used the occasion to highlight OSHA's development of a new injury and illness prevention standard that would require all employers to plan, prevent and protect their workers from hazards specific to their workplace. "Instead of waiting for an OSHA inspection or a workplace tragedy to address workplace hazards," he said, "employers would be required to create a plan for identifying and remediating hazards, and then implement the plan."

- [Read Barab's Remarks](#)

Upcoming Deadlines & Events

[Open Funding Opportunities](#)

Check out the grant opportunities with DOL.

EBSA — Compliance Assistance Seminar

- [July 27, 2010 — Pittsburgh, PA](#)

News You Can Use

Film Your Own Career Video for a Chance to Win \$1,000

Contestants are submitting films for a chance to win \$1,000 in the department's Career Video Challenge. Members of the public are invited to produce and submit short videos focusing on the daily activities of one of 15 high-growth occupations. The challenge runs through August 20, but don't delay the start of your production. High-quality, competitive career videos take time to shoot, edit and polish.



- [View Current Entries and Submit Your Video Today](#)

Around DOL

Helping Patients Appeal Health Plan Decisions



The Obama Administration issued new rules to help patients appeal the decisions of their health plans or insurers on Thursday. The regulation sets standards to give consumers both an internal review and access to an independent review if their claims are denied by their health plans. Secretary Solis said that the rules "will give consumers in new health

plans access to internal and external appeals processes that are clearly defined, impartial, and designed to ensure that, when health care is needed and covered, consumers get it." On Thursday, Phyllis Borzi, DOL's assistant secretary for the Employee Benefits Security Administration briefed members of the press on how the interim final rule is expected to impact Americans — including more than 138 million who are covered through group health plans.

- [Read the News Release](#)
- [Read the Fact Sheet](#)

Department Releases New Study on One-Stop Career Centers

An evaluation study of the Disability Program Navigator Initiative titled "Use of One-Stops by Social Security Disability Beneficiaries in Four States Implementing Disability Program Navigator Initiative" has been released. The study measures whether the public workforce system, particularly the One-Stop Career Center system, is helping people who are receiving Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance find jobs in the workplace. "This administration is focused on reducing the number of people receiving Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income, with the goal of increasing job opportunities," said Assistant Secretary of Labor for Employment and Training Jane Oates. "For the first time, we have data clearly documenting that thousands of Social Security disability beneficiaries are seeking and receiving services from One-Stop Career Centers in four states."

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

The Signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act Turns 20!

Celebrate the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) with Secretary Solis and Assistant Secretary for Disability Employment Policy Kathleen Martinez on Friday, July 30. A highlight of the



EBSA — Voluntary Fiduciary Correction Program Workshop

- [July 27, 2010 — Detroit, MI](#)
- [July 27, 2010 — Detroit, MI](#)

OFCCP — Beyond the Written AAP

- [July 28, 2010 — Houston, TX](#)

OFCCP — Compliance Assistance Obligations Under ADA

- [July 30, 2010 — Richmond, VA](#)

OFCCP — Compliance Assistance Seminar

- [July 28, 2010 — Boston, MA](#)
- [July 28, 2010 — Nashville, TN](#)
- [July 28, 2010 — Pittsburgh, PA](#)
- [July 29, 2010 — Philadelphia, PA](#)

OFCCP — Compliance Assistance Seminar for Construction Contractors

- [July 23, 2010 — Richmond, VA](#)

OFCCP — Affirmative Action Program

- [July 27, 2010 — Jacksonville, FL](#)

OFCCP — Northeast Region: ARRA Construction Symposium

- [July 28, 2010 — New York, NY](#)

OLMS — Compliance Assistance Seminar

- [July 28, 2010 — Chattanooga, TN](#)

OLMS — Trustee Workshop

- [July 27, 2010 — Charlotte, NC](#)

OSHA — 30-Hour Maritime-OTI 7635 for Shipyards and Shipbreaking

- [July 20-23, 2010 — Mobile, AL](#)

OSHA — Northern New Jersey Action Summit for Latino/Immigrant Worker Safety and Health: Making A Difference

- [July 26, 2010 — Whippany, NJ](#)

OSHA — Seminar on Florida's Workers' Compensation Laws and Workplace Safety

- [July 29, 2010 — Tampa, FL](#)
- [July 29, 2010 — Pompano Beach, FL](#)

MSHA — 2010 Metal/Nonmetal National Mine Rescue Contest

- [July 27-29, 2010 — Reno, NV](#)

MSHA — Mine Emergency Preparedness and Response Initiative

- [July 30, 2010 — Reno, NV](#)

event will be the induction of Justin Dart, Jr. and Helen Keller into DOL's Labor Hall of Fame. The Labor Hall of Fame honors, posthumously, those Americans whose distinctive contributions to the field of labor have enhanced the quality of life of America's workers. The event is scheduled for 2 to 3 p.m. in the Great Hall of the Labor Department's Frances Perkins Building in Washington, D.C.

- [View the Invitation](#)

DOL in Action

Labor Department Sues Attorney to Restore Pension Assets

The Labor Department's Office of the Solicitor has sued Savannah, Ga., attorney Benjamin Eichholz to recover assets belonging to his law firm's pension plan. The civil lawsuit follows a criminal probe by the department's Employee Benefits Security Administration and the U.S. Justice Department. Eichholz plead guilty to one count for obstructing the department's investigation and agreed to restore the missing funds. He is currently serving a 21-month prison term for that offense.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Home Depot Fails to Correct Previously Cited Hazards

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has proposed \$112,000 in fines against Home Depot USA Inc. for failing to correct previously cited hazards at the retail chain's West Nyack, N.Y., store. The agency began a follow up inspection after the store repeatedly failed to provide information on correcting the hazards. OSHA found that the store continued to lack suitable emergency drenching facilities for workers who might be splashed with hazardous chemicals and did not provide workers with information and training about methylene chloride. Newly cited hazards included failing to store incompatible chemicals separately and not providing workers with safety goggles.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Opportunities are Open: Brotherly Love

Did you know that the majority of Labor Department employees work in cities outside of the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area? The City of Brotherly Love, Philadelphia, PA., is just one of many places where opportunities are open. Explore the positions below or [view all](#) the rewarding careers with DOL.

1. Position in Philadelphia metro area, PA.
[Information Technology Specialist \(IT Manager\)](#)
DE-10-PHIL-OASAM-0089
Close: 08/03/2010
2. Position in Philadelphia metro area, PA.
[Secretary \(OA\)](#)
DE-10-PHIL-OSHA-0088
Close: 08/04/2010
3. Three Positions: Philadelphia metro area, PA.; Arlington, VA
[Legal Assistant \(OA\) \(Non-Docket\)](#)
DE-10-PHIL-SOL-0092-OC
Close: 01/19/2011

**WHD — ARRA Division B Internet
Presentation**

- [July 29, 2010 — Washington, D.C.](#)
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