



DOL News Brief

March 24, 2011

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WOMEN ORGANIZE!

The compelling history behind the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire of 1911 highlights the critical need to ensure worker safety and labor standards for all workers – including a new generation of immigrant workers. It is also a story of women who were seeking to improve their workplaces and their lives by coming together to form a union. On March 28, 2011, Secretary Solis and Valerie Jarrett, senior advisor to the president and chair of the White House Council on Women and Girls, will host **WOMEN ORGANIZE!**, a Women’s History Month forum with women workers and organizers sharing their stories of courageous action. The event will be webcast live at 9 a.m. EDT.

- [View the Webcast](#)

Shiu @ Pa. Minority Bar

Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs Director Patricia Shiu encouraged participants at the Pennsylvania Bar Association Minority Bar Committee’s 23rd Annual Minority Attorney Conference to find ways in their careers to give back. She also told conference attendees that the Department of Labor is “committed to enforcing our laws to keep the doors of opportunity open for all workers – even if we have to pry those doors open from time to time. Enforcing our laws doesn’t just benefit workers. It also levels the playing field for employers.”



- [Read the Remarks](#)

Philly Women Go “Green”



On Wednesday, more than 100 Philadelphia-area women interested in careers in the growing “green” industries attended the

What's New

Commemorating 100th Anniversary of Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire



With audio narrated by Secretary Solis and other senior Labor Department officials, a new Labor Department website highlights 21 locations throughout the New York City metropolitan area that played a role in the March 25, 1911, Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire. Users can read and hear about the events that led up to the fire, its victims and the aftermath. The fire killed 146 workers and was an early tipping point in the struggle to ensure

basic health and safety precautions in the 20th century workplace. “The events of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire and their impact over the last 100 years are chilling reminders of the importance of the work of the Labor Department,” said Solis. “As we continue to ensure that every company takes responsibility for the safety and health of its workers, we must also remember that although much has improved over the last 100 years, these images are still relevant today.” On Friday, March 25, at approximately noon EDT, Secretary Solis is expected to deliver keynote remarks at the 100th anniversary commemoration of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire sponsored by the Service Employees International Union in Greenwich Village (Washington and Green Streets) in Manhattan.

- [Read the News Release](#)
- [Take the Mobile Tour](#)
- [Visit the Full Site](#)

Michaels Discusses Triangle Fire

Assistant Secretary for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration David Michaels participated in two panel discussions at the City University of New York on Thursday to mark the 100th anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire. One discussion reviewed the gains in workplace safety and health from 1911 to the present, and highlighted 40 years of accomplishments by OSHA. The second panel examined the “contemporary legacy” of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire. “At the turn of 20th century, deaths in American workplaces were all too common. Conditions for workers were terrible and reform was very slow to get enacted,” he said. “It took a huge tragedy like the Triangle fire to mandate humane reforms and galvanize not just New York, but the entire nation around worker protection laws.”

Take Three

One year ago this week, President Obama signed into law the Affordable Care Act making health care more accessible and affordable for Americans. Secretary Solis

Green Training and Education Fair, co-sponsored by the Philadelphia region's Women's Bureau and Employment and Training Administration. Industry leaders from the local area discussed training opportunities and apprenticeship programs for women. Other sponsors of the fair included the Federation of Neighborhood Centers, Metropolitan Career Center, Community College of Philadelphia and People for People.

- [View the Slideshow](#)

Introducing Students to Safety

When more than 5,000 students entered the Georgia International Convention Center this year for the Construction Education Foundation of



Georgia's CareerExpo and SkillsUSA competition, they found themselves in a simulated construction site and were greeted by employees from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's three Georgia-area Offices. CEFGA arranged for each student to receive a hardhat, safety glasses and a safety orientation session as part of an experience that simulated the construction of a real Georgia high school. Students operated heavy equipment and participated in a variety of skilled trades to help them understand the career opportunities available to them. "OSHA is here because with half of the construction workforce nearing retirement age, it is important that this next generation carry with them a culture of safety from day one as they move from the classroom to work," said William Fulcher, director of OSHA's Atlanta-East area office.

- [View the Slideshow](#)

KC Women's Bureau Hosts Workplace Flexibility Forum

The Women's Bureau hosted its National Dialogue on Workplace Flexibility at The Kauffman Foundation Conference Center in Kansas City, Missouri on Thursday. The forum built on the message and momentum of the March 2010 White House Flexibility Forum and focused on challenges and solutions in the retail industry. "The Women's Bureau has chosen to focus on workplace flexibility because of its importance to our nation's working families, businesses and the economy," said Dr. Dorothy

answers three questions about the new law.

The health care reform law contains a provision benefiting young adults. Can you explain how it works?

Yes. The new law already ensures young adults up to age 26 have an option when it comes to their health care. Historically, some 30 percent of young adults have been uninsured – a rate far higher than that of any other age group. The new law allows young adults to remain on their parents' plan, or rejoin it until age 26, even if they no longer live with their parents, are not a dependent on their tax return or are no longer a student. The new flexibility even applies if they are married. This is very helpful as they continue through school, or transition into the job market where health care coverage may not be immediately available through their employer.

What are some of the other benefits available now?

Currently, in a step towards good jobs for everyone, up to 4 million small businesses are eligible for a tax credit to help them provide insurance benefits to their workers. Also, the new law says coverage cannot be denied for those under age 19 because of a pre-existing condition, annual dollar caps on care are limited, and all new plans must pay for potentially lifesaving routine procedures such as mammograms, cervical cancer screenings and colonoscopies.

What should we expect to see in the coming years?

By 2014, denying coverage to anyone based on a pre-existing condition will be banned. Annual dollar caps on care, which are already limited, will be prohibited, and state-based health insurance exchanges will create a new marketplace, giving more employers and millions of Americans the ability to purchase affordable coverage.

International Scene

Solis Joins POTUS' El Salvador Trip to Promote DOL Programs

As part of President Obama's Latin America trip, Secretary Solis traveled to El Salvador on Tuesday to meet with representatives of their government to strengthen existing partnerships. Solis and El Salvador first lady Dr. Vanda Pignato announced a project to help the country combat exploitive child labor and the department's commitment to contribute \$10 million over the next four years to support that initiative. She also signed a joint declaration with the Foreign Minister of El Salvador Hugo Martinez that will educate and train Salvadoran citizens about their rights to safe workplaces and to receive the full wages owed to them under the laws of the United States.



- [Read the Child Labor News Release](#)
- [Read the Child Labor News Release \(en Español\)](#)
- [Read the Migrant Workers' News Release](#)
- [Read the Migrant Workers' News Release \(en Español\)](#)
- [View the Slideshow](#)

News You Can Use

Supreme Court Supports Workers



Witherspoon, administrator of the Kansas City Regional Office of the Women's Bureau. "The department is committed to helping working families achieve a better balance between work and family responsibilities."

- [Read the News Release](#)

Women's History Month Panelists Engage in Fireside Chat in Atlanta

The Women's Bureau and the YWCA of Greater Atlanta partnered for the second year to highlight the contributions of



prominent Atlanta women in a free event celebrating National Women's History Month. "The Story Behind the Story, A Fireside Chat" was held last Wednesday. The night brought about intimate discussions as more than 200 women from different walks of life came together with a common purpose: to provide inspiration and wisdom to girls and women alike. "The evening was a magical celebration of our sisterhood and the many challenges, triumphs, and contributions that we have in common as women," said Paulette Norvel Lewis, Regional Administrator of the Women's Bureau.

- [View the Slideshow](#)

Solis, Oates Meet w/ Mayor Menino



Secretary Solis and Assistant Secretary of the Employment and Training Administration Jane Oates, met this week with the mayor of one of America's most

historic cities, Boston Mayor Thomas Menino, to discuss a range of topics including summer jobs, and job training program opportunities offered to public housing residents through the support of DOL programs. Mayor Menino has been a national leader and strong advocate of the mayors' summer youth programs for decades, and committed to helping Secretary Solis continue to keep the program alive during the summer of 2011. Like other mayors nationwide, he has led successful summer work programs funded by the private sector and has been a leader in innovative projects to ease the re-entry of young adult offenders.

Attorneys Key to MSHA

In a major victory for workers, the U.S. Supreme Court released its decision Tuesday in *Kasten v. Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics Corp.* The court agreed with the department that an employee who complains orally, rather than in writing, about not receiving compensation for all hours worked is protected from retaliation. This decision will also protect workers who make oral complaints under a variety of other whistleblower statutes administered by the Labor Department. The department administers the Fair Labor Standards Act and filed an amicus brief in conjunction with the U.S. Solicitor General and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. The decision ensures that workers with limited English skills will not be prevented from exercising their rights under the FLSA due to their inability to communicate effectively in writing.

- [Read the Decision](#)

Attention Veterans – Share Your Success Story

Have you recently transitioned from the military to the civil service? If so, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management wants to hear your story! As part of President Obama's Executive Order 13518, Employment of Veterans in the Federal Government, OPM is highlighting successful veterans who chose to serve America again through federal government careers. Additionally, as part of DOL's America's Heroes at Work initiative, we are looking for veterans living with TBI and/or PTSD who have employment success stories.

- [Submit Your Story to OPM](#)
- [Submit Your Story to America's Heroes at Work](#)

Around DOL

OSHA Hosts First Trainer Exchange Conference

Nearly 100 recipients of the Susan Harwood Capacity Building grants participated in the first Occupational Safety and Health

Administration's first Trainer Exchange conference at DOL's Frances Perkins building this week. The conference was started this



year to promote best practices in occupational safety and health training and evaluation for vulnerable workers in high-risk jobs. The two-day event emphasized an open exchange between the grantees and subject matter experts through breakout sessions, panel discussions and networking. "These grantees are helping OSHA reach the most vulnerable sectors of our workforce. They provide valuable information on workers' rights, job hazards and protections that they need to stay safe at their workplace every day," said Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health David Michaels.

OSHA and STEPS Form Alliance

The department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration has formed a new alliance with the South Louisiana Service Transmission, Exploration and Production Safety Network. The alliance will focus on furthering the safety and health for oil and gas workers in Louisiana. "The joint resources of this relationship will help make the oil and gas industry as safe and healthful as possible," said William A. Burke, OSHA's acting regional administrator in Dallas.

- [Read the News Release](#)

DOL Working for You

Job Corps Student Takes Heat in Stride as Welder

Backlog Reduction

Staff attorneys recently hired in the Philadelphia, Atlanta and Denver Regional Offices of the Solicitor — as a result of the Supplemental



Appropriations Act of 2010 signed by President Obama — have made tremendous progress in helping to reduce a backlog of contested cases pending before the federal Mine Safety and Health Review. Over the past nearly eight months, the hard work of these attorneys has resulted in a significant reduction of the backlog, and millions of dollars in civil penalties have been ordered to be paid in these cases.

OSHA Reaches Out to Small Businesses

In partnership with the Small Business Administration's Office of Advocacy, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration announced three upcoming teleconferences to get input from the small business community on a proposal to add a column for work-related musculoskeletal disorders in employer injury and illness logs. The teleconferences will be held on April 11 and 12, and small businesses from around the country are encouraged to participate. Participants will have the opportunity to provide input about their experiences in recording work-related MSDs and how they believe the proposed rule would impact them.

- [Read the News Release](#)
- [Learn More](#)

Upcoming Deadlines & Events

Check out the grant opportunities with DOL.

- [Open Funding Opportunities](#)

Help Shape Our Regulatory Process
We want your input in response to the President's Executive Order on improving regulatory review. [Visit our public commenting page](#) by March 31 to submit your own ideas, support existing ideas, or comment on what you see.



Northlands, Vt. Job Corps Center student Rachael Anderson has a strong work ethic and likes to work with her hands. So it is not too surprising she has decided to pursue a future occupation not often associated with women — welding. Admitting that she is not a desk bound kind of person, the 20-year-old has taken difficult courses in occupational safety, welding mathematics, plasma arc cutting, and welding base metals with gas tungsten. Although she will be certified in welding when she graduates this summer, Anderson's long-range plans include attending college for a graphic arts degree. Anderson, whose mother attended Northlands twenty years ago, also serves as a role model for the program, where a number of female students have since enrolled in welding classes. Job Corps "has showed me I am capable of accomplishing anything I put my mind to," she said.

EBSA Colleagues Team Up, Save Unemployed Worker's Benefits

Two Employee Benefits Security

Administration advisors recently teamed up to reinstate health benefits for an ill unemployed worker who lost them because of a billing error. The man faced \$18,000 in out-of-pocket costs. EBSA's Adrineh Arakelian contacted the company about its error and explained that they had violated a "safe harbor" period



allowing for coverage while mistakes are fixed. But the HR company balked, insisting the individual was in fact at fault and could not be reinstated. Her EBSA colleague, Marvin Fernandez, then tried another approach, going directly to the man's former company and explaining it was in violation of government regulations. After some haggling, the company reinstated the benefits of its former employee. In an email to EBSA's office the grateful man said "You all are not just shuffling paperwork and case numbers, you are helping people get on with their lives and you fight for what is right."

DOL in Action

Long-Term Care, Supports and Services Competency Model Released

Over the past several months, the Employment and Training Administration has worked with federal and industry partners to identify the core competencies required of workers who provide long-term care, support and services for individuals with disabilities and older adults in need of assistance. This research has led to the department releasing the Long-Term Care, Supports and Services Competency Model. "Competency models outline the knowledge and skills needed by workers in specific industries, and are helpful tools to ensure that our workforce is prepared to fill important occupations," said Jane Oates, assistant secretary for ETA. "There is a growing need for professionals who enhance the health and well-being of people with disabilities, and care providers who work with aging adults, enabling them to live self-determined lives."

- [View the LTCSS Competency Model](#)
- [Read the News Release](#)

Initiative to Eliminate Wage Violations in Construction

The Wage and Hour Division's Hartford District Office will investigate general contractors and subcontractors working on large construction projects in Connecticut and Rhode Island in order to identify patterns of minimum wage, overtime and recordkeeping violations. The initiative also seeks to map the employment relationships among the layers of contractors

How Does it Work?



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EBSA — Voluntary Fiduciary Correction Program Workshop

- [April 4 — Fort Wright, KY](#)

MSHA — Spring Thaw Workshop

- [March 29 — Torrington, WY](#)

OFCCP — ABCs of the AAP

- [April 15 — Los Angeles, CA](#)

OFCCP — Affirmative Action Steps

- [March 29 — Honolulu, HI](#)

OFCCP — Building Partnerships for the Community

- [March 29 — Jacksonville, FL](#)

OFCCP — Community Connections

- [March 31 — Memphis, TN](#)

OFCCP — Compliance Assistance Seminar

- [March 30 — Miami, FL](#)

OFCCP — Compliance Assistance Seminar for Construction Contractors

- [March 30 — Hartford, CT](#)
- [April 19 — Mountainside, NJ](#)

OFCCP — Compliance Assistance Seminar for Supply and Service Contractors

- [March 30 — Nashville, TN](#)
- [March 30 — San Diego, CA](#)
- [April 5 — Mountainside, NJ](#)
- [April 20 — San Diego, CA](#)

OFCCP — Employer Outreach for Green Initiatives

- [March 30 — Valparaiso, IL](#)

to better target enforcement efforts and have a broad-based, top-down effect on the industry. Between 2000 and 2010, the WHD conducted nearly 300 investigations of construction industry employers in Rhode Island and Connecticut that resulted in the payment of \$5.6 million in back wages to nearly 3,300 workers.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Department Sues Investment Firm to Recover More Than \$1 Million

The department has sued Results One Financial LLC of Elmhurst, Ill., and Steven Salutric, co-founder and director of the investment management company, for allegedly withdrawing more than \$1 million from five pension plan client accounts and misdirecting the assets to entities in which he had a financial interest. The lawsuit follows an investigation by the department's Employee Benefits Security Administration into alleged violations of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act. "These acts have jeopardized the retirement security of many workers," said EBSA Assistant Secretary Phyllis Borzi. "It is particularly egregious when those charged with the responsibility of protecting workers' benefits violate that trust by committing illegal acts for personal gain."

- [Read the News Release](#)

WHD in the Fields of South Florida to Protect Farmworkers' Rights

A combined Southeast Wage and Hour Division strike force has been making unannounced visits to farms in South Florida to enforce federal labor laws that include the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act, the Fair Labor Standards Act and the Occupational Safety and Health Act's Field Sanitation Standard. Virtually all employees engaged in agriculture are covered by federal law because they produce goods for interstate commerce. "The Labor Department is committed to enforcing labor standards that protect and enhance the welfare of the nation's farmworkers," said Secretary Solis. "Through outreach, we are spreading the word to farm labor contractors and growers that they must pay their workers the wages they have earned."

- [Read the News Release](#)

WHD Fines Piggly Wiggly for Minors Performing Hazardous Jobs

The department has collected \$34,485 in civil money penalties from Bellyon Inc., doing business as Piggly Wiggly supermarket in Bunkie, La., for requiring 52 minors to operate hazardous equipment such as scrap paper balers, violating federal child labor provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act. In addition, the Wage and Hour Division recovered \$1,960 in back wages for 26 current and former cashiers and stock workers who were required to pay for cash register shortages from their own wages.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Millwork Company Fined for Exposing Workers to Possible Amputations

OFCCP — Equal Pay Day Event

- [April 13 — San Jose, CA](#)

OFCCP — Women in Non-Traditional Jobs Workshop

- [March 31 — San Antonio, TX](#)

OLMS — Compliance Assistance Seminar

- [March 30 — New Orleans, LA](#)

WB — National Dialogue on Workplace Flexibility

- [March 31 — Silver Spring, MD](#)

WB — Women Working Together Writing the Next Chapter of HerStory

- [April 25 — Philadelphia, PA](#)

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has cited Trautschold Millwork Ltd. in Waco, Texas, for exposing its employees to numerous safety hazards including possible amputations. Twenty-two serious and two other-than-serious violations were cited with proposed penalties of \$75,525. Violations included failing to provide adequate guarding on hazardous machinery such as explosive proof wiring and failing to provide training for employees who operate forklifts. "OSHA's standards must be followed to prevent the loss of limb and life," said Zachary Barnett, OSHA's area director in Fort Worth.

- [Read the News Release](#)

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