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Secretary of Labor announces new members of Whistleblower Protection Advisory Committee *WPAC meeting scheduled for Jan. 29, 2013*

WASHINGTON – Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis today announced the inaugural appointees and the first meeting of the Whistleblower Protection Advisory Committee. The purpose of the WPAC is to advise, consult with and make recommendations to the secretary of labor and the assistant secretary of labor for occupational safety and health on ways to improve the fairness, efficiency, effectiveness and transparency of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration’s whistleblower protection programs.

“Protecting workers who identify wrongdoing is an essential cornerstone of the U.S. Department of Labor’s worker protection enforcement efforts,” said Secretary Solis. “The members of the whistleblower committee, who represents the interests of labor, management and the public, will utilize their expertise to provide valuable advice and recommendations to help OSHA strengthen and improve our whistleblower protection program.”

The 12 voting and three ad-hoc members of the WPAC were appointed by Secretary Solis. All members will serve two-year terms, and the committee will meet at least twice a year. The members are:

Three members represent the public:

- Jonathan Brock, retired associate professor, Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs, University of Washington; and chairman, Hanford Concerns Council
- Richard Moberly, associate dean, University of Nebraska
- Emily Spieler, Edwin W. Hadley professor of law, Northeastern School of Law (chairperson)

Four members represent management:

- David Eherts, vice president and chief safety officer, Sikorsky Aircraft Corp.
- Gregory Keating, shareholder, co-chair of the whistleblowing practice group and member of the board of directors, Littler Mendelson P.C.
- Marcía Narine, visiting professor at the University of Missouri; and compliance consultant, MDO Partners
- Kenneth Wengert, C.S.P., A.R.M., director of safety, environment and business continuity planning, Kraft Foods

Four members represent labor:

- Ava Barbour, associate general counsel, International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America
- Eric Frumin, health and safety director, Change to Win
- Billie Garde, partner, Clifford & Garde LLP
- Nancy Lessin, program director, United Steelworkers’ Tony Mazzocchi Center for Health, Safety and Environmental Education

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One member represents OSHA state plans:

- Christine Dougherty, discrimination investigator, Minnesota Department of Labor & Industry

Three non-voting members represent federal agencies:

- Rina Tucker Harris, enforcement attorney, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau
- John Van Steenburg, chief safety officer, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
- Jason Zuckerman, senior legal advisor, U.S. Office of Special Counsel

WPAC will hold its first meeting on Jan. 29, 2013, at the Labor Department's Frances Perkins Building in Washington, D.C., to make recommendations regarding the development and/or implementation of better customer service to workers and employers, improvement in the investigative and enforcement processes, improvement of regulations governing OSHA investigations, and recommendations for cooperative activities with federal agencies responsible for areas also covered by the whistleblower protection statutes enforced by OSHA.

More information on how to participate will be included in a notice to be published in the Federal Register next week.

OSHA enforces the whistleblower provisions of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 and 21 other statutes protecting employees who report reasonably perceived violations of various workplace, commercial motor vehicle, airline, nuclear, pipeline, environmental, railroad, public transportation, maritime, consumer product, health care reform, corporate securities, food safety and consumer financial reform regulations. Additional information is available at <http://www.whistleblowers.gov>.

Under the OSH Act, employers are responsible for providing safe and healthful workplaces for their employees. OSHA's role is to ensure these conditions for America's working men and women by setting and enforcing standards, and providing training, education and assistance. For more information, visit <http://www.osha.gov>.

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