

Workplace Health Initiative Restored Administration Admits Screwing Up

WASHINGTON DC, March 20 -- In a surprise move, Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao announced today that the Department of Labor would ask Congress to reinstate the Clinton administration's ergonomics standard that was repealed last year by the Republican-controlled Congress and signed one year ago today by President Bush. Chao also announced that the regulations would be expanded to include the construction industry.

"What can I say? We screwed up," Chao explained.

"After reviewing the entire ergonomics record, we could not have been more impressed by the old standard," Chao said. Chao's statement was confirmed by Solicitor of Labor Eugene Scalia, who also revealed today that when his recess appointment ends later this year, he would do penance by taking a job for one dollar a year in the legal department of the United Food and Commercial Workers union.

Meanwhile, White House Press Spokesman Ari Fleischer announced that the President was "delighted" with Chao's decision. "The President, as you know, has always been a supporter of strong protections for American workers," Fleischer said. "The President is particularly pleased that the new ergonomics regulations will now cover construction workers who were inexplicably ignored by the Clinton Administration's ergonomics

rule." Fleischer characterized the President's position as "Leave no worker behind."



AFL-CIO President John Sweeney stated that he was pleased with Administration's decision and expressed hope that Bush would have a similar change of heart on trade, taxes, the budget, minimum wage, the environment, health care policy, infrastructure investment, job training, prescription drugs, OSHA training grants, pensions, unemployment compensation, judicial nominations, contractor responsibility rules, the patients' bill of rights, labor law reform, welfare reform, immigration reform, election reform, campaign finance reform, social security privatization, project labor agreements, and health care benefits for steelworker retirees.

Scalia, a controversial nominee to the powerful Labor Department position, received a one-year recess appointment from President Bush after Senate Leader Tom Daschel (D-SD) refused to bring his nomination to the Senate floor for a vote, citing lack of sufficient support.

Fighting back tears at the press conference, Scalia explained that his change of heart was “personally quite painful.”

“I now understand that my former colleagues at Gibson, Dunn and Crutcher are actually possessed by evil demons, especially [Gibson, Dunn and Crutcher partner] Baruch Fellner,” Scalia stated. “Baruch may seem like a nice mellow guy, but it turns out he’s actually the spawn of the Devil,” Scalia explained. “He lured me into his evil cabal with promises of fame and fortune. I gave them my mind, but they wanted my soul.”

Fellner was unavailable for comment although a spokesperson with Gibson, Dunn and Crutcher denied that Scalia’s statements had anything to do with a drug problem.

Scalia also admitted that he had never actually read the original ergonomics standard because members of his firm told him that the 8-page standard was actually 600 pages long. When informed that the Preamble and not the actual standard was 600 pages long, Scalia responded “So how was I supposed to know? That’s what we hire clerks for.”