



## Change To Win Proposals on Occupational Safety and Health and Related Issues

Change to Win urgently recommends that the Obama Administration and the Congress collaborate to sharply improve the basic functions of federal agencies responsible for protecting of the health and safety of America's workers on the job – and to expand the work of those agencies where needed. Since the government's role also allows the involvement of state agencies, the Administration's effort must also address the severe shortcomings of the state agencies as well.

OSHA itself has reached a critical juncture in its 37-year history. For over a decade, OSHA has sought primarily to collaborate with corporate employers rather than view them as employers with compliance obligations. Worse, while corporate organizations now dominate most sectors of our economy, OSHA is still locked in an enforcement model based on individual establishments. OSHA – in cooperation with the Solicitor's Office -- should:

### A new information infrastructure

- establish an information infrastructure to identify systematic patterns of labor violations by corporate organizations.
- increase enforcement of injury recordkeeping rules, including training of compliance staff

### Serious enforcement

- increase OSHA and SOL staffing to support increases in enforcement.
- support greater labor union participation in OSHA inspections and settlement negotiations
- stop "unclassified" violations in fatality cases
- effectively target enforcement for smaller employers in high-risk industries (construction, etc).
- increase OSHA and SOL staff for criminal investigations and prosecutions, and increase staff training.
- assure that multi-employer groups at all inspected job sites are held accountable for compliance -- not just at construction sites -- and address abuses regarding misclassification of employment status.

### Protecting and educating workers

- heightened anti-retaliation enforcement
- reduce resources for voluntary compliance programs and increase resources for worker/union training

### Removing the barriers to new standards

OSHA's regulatory program has suffered deeply at the hands of previous administrations, as well as from the Congress' inexcusable reversal of the Ergonomics Standard in 2001. OSHA needs a clear mandate to:

- issue the standards that are already in the pipeline and respond to the immediate crises involving recently-identified hazards (e.g. silica dust, Safety and Health Programs; combustible dusts; diacetyl; etc.).
- fashion a new process to quickly adopt the standards needed to protect workers from well-known chemical and related hazards.

Outside of OSHA, the Obama Administration also confronts a legacy of neglect at MSHA, NIOSH, Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (notwithstanding its exemplary strengths and accomplishments which deserve more support), the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission, and several key functions at EPA. The leadership failure at these other agencies now offers an opportunity for new support, including:

- provision of additional funding and direction of the funding to worker safety and health priorities.
- selection of committed leaders
- assurance that related agencies like CDC and EPA respect and enhance their own worker safety and health programs, rather than diverting resources into other research or regulatory programs.

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