

## News Release

**ILAB News Release: [03/22/2011]**

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**Release Number: 11-0402-NAT**

### **US Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis joins President Obama in El Salvador to highlight labor solidarity in protecting migrant workers' rights**

**WASHINGTON** — U.S. Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis and El Salvador Minister of Foreign Affairs Hugo Martinez today signed a new agreement that will make it easier to protect the rights of citizens of El Salvador who work in the United States. Secretary Solis is in El Salvador to strengthen partnerships with the government, having joined President Obama for part of his Latin America trip.

Through education and training, the joint declaration will help make migrant workers aware of their rights to safe workplaces and to receive full payment of wages owed to them under the laws of the United States. Both migrant and American workers suffer when employers evade their legal responsibilities to migrant workers.

"Salvadorans are an important part of both the American and the world economy. Their rights should be respected and protected, and I am pleased that the U.S. and Salvadoran governments are working together to help make that happen," said Secretary Solis.

The program has already been implemented in the U.S. for the benefit of other migrant workers. Under this agreement, regional offices of the Labor Department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration and its Wage and Hour Division will cooperate with the Salvadoran Embassy and Salvadoran consulates in the U.S to reach out directly to migrant workers. The Labor Department will distribute information about health, safety and wage laws, and will provide training for workers.

The program also will help the department identify problems experienced by Salvadoran migrant workers and better target labor law enforcement efforts. For example, OSHA will provide a toll-free telephone number staffed by multilingual operators who are ready, day and night, to receive workers' calls.

For more information, visit <http://www.dol.gov/ilab/toolkit>.

- Read this news release [en Español](#).

## Migrant Worker Partnership Program

Under the Joint Declaration to be signed, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) will cooperate with the Salvadoran Embassy and Salvadoran consulates throughout the US to educate Salvadoran citizens about their rights in the workplace, and to ensure that these rights are protected.

Many workers from other countries do not know that they are entitled to certain rights under U.S. law, including the right to safe and healthy work places and the right to be paid what they are owed under US law. They are often afraid to demand their rights or report labor violations, for fear of more abuse or loss of their job. If employers are able to evade such responsibilities to migrant workers, this can drive down the wages and working conditions of all workers in the US. To help migrant workers understand and act on their rights, DOL has developed a model that is based on outreach to workers in partnership with consulates from their home countries.

Under the program to be implemented, regional enforcement offices of DOL's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and Wage and Hour Division (WHD) will cooperate with consulates that serve Salvadoran migrant workers.

Regional OSHA and WHD enforcement offices will work with consulates to distribute information about US workplace health and safety and wage laws. The program also helps DOL identify problems experienced by migrant workers and to better target its labor law enforcement efforts. OSHA will provide a toll-free phone number staffed by multilingual operators who are ready, day and night, to receive workers' calls. And WHD will help workers recover unpaid wages. As part of the similar partnership with Mexico, WHD has recovered more than \$21.5 million in unpaid wages on behalf of more than 15,000 workers.

In December of 2010, Secretary Solis hosted eight Ambassadors from Central America and the Caribbean at a meeting to describe this program, and invited them to enter into similar agreements. El Salvador will be the first of these countries to establish an agreement with the US.