

# AFL-CIO

## LEGISLATIVE ALERT

September 17, 2019

The Honorable Lamar Alexander, Chairman  
455 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray, Ranking Minority Member  
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Alexander and Ranking Minority Member Murray:

On behalf of the AFL-CIO, I am writing to express our strong opposition to the nomination of Eugene Scalia to be Secretary of Labor.

The Department of Labor is critical to the rights and well-being of millions of workers in this country, and working people need a Secretary of Labor who has demonstrated a commitment to the Department's mission. The Department has the critical task of ensuring fair payment of wages and overtime, safeguarding workers' benefits, protecting workers from harassment and discrimination, guaranteeing their health and safety, and providing opportunities for job training through high quality registered apprenticeships. We need a Secretary of Labor whose top priority is protecting the health, safety and economic security of working people.

By contrast, Eugene Scalia has spent his entire career representing corporate interests and fighting against the interests of working people. He has spent decades defending corporate interests such as Wal-Mart, the Chamber of Commerce, Wall Street banks, and Boeing. As AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka said when Scalia's nominations was previewed back in July:

Eugene Scalia has spent his entire career making life more difficult and dangerous for working people. We opposed him in 2002 for Solicitor of Labor based on his anti-worker record, and his disdain for working people has worsened, not improved ... His extreme views are in direct conflict with what America deserves from a secretary of labor.

In 2001, President Bush nominated Scalia to be Solicitor of Labor. Unions and other workers advocates strongly opposed Scalia's nomination in large part because of his opposition to the Clinton administration's efforts to adopt a standard to protect workers from repetitive motion injuries (the so-called "ergonomics" rule). Speaking on behalf of the employers, Scalia had dismissed ergonomics as "junk science" and "quackery." In a Wall Street Journal opinion piece, he had written "that ergonomic regulation will force companies to give more rest periods,

slow the pace of work, and then hire more workers (read: dues-paying members) to maintain current levels of production.”

After leaving the Labor Department in 2003, Scalia returned to the law firm of Gibson, Dunn and Crutcher, where he continued defending corporations against worker lawsuits and opposing regulations that provide protections for workers and consumers. He has earned a reputation as the “go-to” lawyer to attack worker-protective regulations.

As demonstrated by his entire career, Eugene Scalia is the antithesis of what is required from a Secretary of Labor and what working people deserve to expect from the Department of Labor. Corporations and the rich already have abundant representation in the Trump administration. Working people cannot afford to have yet another corporate defender representing them at the Labor Department.

For these reasons, the AFL-CIO strongly opposes this nomination.

Sincerely,



William Samuel  
Director, Government Affairs

CC: HELP Committee Members

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**American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations**

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