

U.S. Rep. Pocan: Introduces Contractor Accountability and Workplace Safety Act

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Washington, D.C. – U.S. Representative Mark Pocan (WI-02) today introduced the Contractor Accountability and Workplace Safety Act, legislation that would help ensure that companies contracting with the federal government maintain safe workplaces. The legislation comes as President Trump has revoked the Fair Pay and Safe Workplaces Executive Order, which required companies to disclose past labor law violations when bidding for large federal contracts. Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) has introduced companion legislation in the U.S. Senate.

“Rather than stand up for the hardworking men and women of this nation, President Trump has decided to side with crooked contractors and corporate interests. When he revoked the Fair Pay and Workplaces Executive Order earlier this year, President Trump exposed American workers to potentially dangerous conditions that could have deadly results,” **said Pocan.** “When the federal government grants a contract, workers should have the assurance that their work place is safe and their employer does not have a history overrun with labor law violations. The Contractor Accountability and Workplace Safety Act would restore many protections for workers and help ensure that the U.S. government allocates federal taxpayer dollars responsibly.”

“Every American deserves a safe workplace, but too often, federal contractors break labor laws and endanger their employees while continuing to suck down millions of dollars in government contracts,” **said Warren.** “This legislation will

help ensure that companies that threaten the health and safety of their workers won't receive another dime from American taxpayers."

Existing regulations require that contracting officers within the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) make a determination of responsibility of a prospective contractor to evaluate its "business ethics." However, the requirement is generally interpreted to relate to efficiency and costs, rather than worker safety. This bill would require contracting officers, when considering a bid for a contract worth more than \$1,000,000, to:

- Consult the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's inspection database for past safety and health violations by the bidder or relevant subcontractors known to the DOD;
- Consider any violations he/she identifies as part of the bid's "responsibility determination;" and
- Refer violations to the DOD's suspension and debarment official.

The bill would also require the DOD to train contracting officials on how to evaluate safety as part of the responsibility determination. Lastly, the bill requires the Government Accountability Office to evaluate the DOD's procedures for evaluating contractors' safety records, the incidence of safety violations among DOD contractors, whether the Department of Labor (DOL) has the resources to investigate violations among DOD contractors, and whether the DOL should consider expanding its investigatory role into DOD contractors.

The legislation has been endorsed by the AFL-CIO, Center for American Progress Action Fund, Economic Policy Institute (EPI), International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Allied Workers, International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers (BAC), International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE), International Union of Painters and Allied Trades (IUPAT), National Council for Occupational Safety and Health (National COSH), National Employment Law Project (NELP), Service Employees International Union (SEIU), and the United Association of Plumbers, Pipefitters, Sprinklerfitters and Service Techs (UA).

Joining Pocan as original cosponsors of the legislation are U.S. Representatives David Cicilline (RI-01), John Conyers (MI-13), Mark DeSaulnier (CA-11), Marcy Kaptur (OH-09), Jim McGovern (MA-02), Jerrold Nadler (NY-10), Donald Norcross (NJ-01), Frank Pallone (NJ-06), Jan Schakowsky (IL-09), and Mark Takano (CA-41).

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