

# Client Alert



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## President-Elect Obama Taps Hilda L. Solis as Secretary of Labor

President-Elect Barack Obama will nominate Congresswoman Hilda L. Solis (D-CA) as his choice for Secretary of Labor.

As the daughter of a union family, Rep. Solis has long been a strong supporter of organized labor. Her political career began as an Assemblywoman in the California State Assembly from 1992 to 1994. After serving as an Assemblywoman, Rep. Solis was elected to the California State Senate in 1994. While in the State Senate, Rep. Solis chaired the Senate Industrial Relations Committee and, among other things, worked to increase California's minimum wage in 1996.

In 2000, Rep. Solis was elected to Congress from California's 32<sup>nd</sup> District. As a member of Congress, Rep. Solis has been a staunch supporter of raising the minimum wage, pay equity and other issues of importance to organized labor.

The following is a short list of Congresswoman Solis' positions on various labor and employment issues:

- *Employee Free Choice Act ("EFCA"):* Congresswoman Solis co-sponsored and strongly supports EFCA (H.R. 800), which is sure to be the top priority of organized labor once the new administration takes office. In its current form, EFCA would, among other things, allow the National Labor Relations Board to certify labor organizations based on authorization cards signed by a majority of employees in an appropriate bargaining unit as well as impose strict requirements on the negotiation of initial collective bargaining agreements between unions and employers. The following is a link to Congresswoman Solis' comments on the House floor in support of EFCA:  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ON0d\\_cU\\_98&feature=channel](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ON0d_cU_98&feature=channel)
- *Pay Equity:* Congresswoman Solis also co-sponsored the Paycheck Fairness Act (H.R. 1338), which limits the "any factor other than sex" defense to an Equal Pay Act ("EPA") claim, expands the categories of protected activity under the Fair Labor Standards Act's anti-retaliation provision and broadens the scope of damages available to plaintiffs who successfully assert EPA claims. The following is a link to Congresswoman Solis' comments on the House floor in support of the Paycheck Fairness Act:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oNLnXNYbfc0&feature=channel>
- *"Green Collar" Jobs:* Congresswoman Solis supports the creation of "green collar" jobs through government investment in a plan to promote domestic energy production. She authored the Green Jobs Act of 2007, which allocates \$125 million to help train employees for green collar jobs, and which was passed as part of the Energy Independence and Security Act signed by President Bush on December 19, 2007.
- *Minimum Wage:* Throughout her time in public office, Congresswoman Solis has consistently endorsed efforts to increase the minimum wage. She co-sponsored the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007, resulting in increases to the federal minimum wage.

- *Unemployment Benefits:* Earlier this year, Congresswoman Solis voted in favor of extending unemployment insurance benefits for employees who have become unemployed because of the economy.
- *Pension Reform:* Congresswoman Solis supported the *AmeriSave Plan*, which was introduced by House Democrats in 2005 as a means of creating alternative retirement options for workers and would provide

incentives to small business to offer retirement plans. In addition to these provisions, the *AmeriSave Plan* also would make it more difficult for employers to eliminate pension plans while in bankruptcy.

To be accepted as Secretary of Labor, Congresswoman Solis' nomination must be approved by the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, followed by confirmation by the full Senate.

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