

(ii) in subsection (d)(1), by striking “Delegate,” each place it appears; and

(iii) in subsection (d)(2)—

(I) by striking “(A) In the event” and all that follows through “term of office,” and inserting “In the event that a vacancy occurs in the office of Representative in Congress before May 1 of the last year of the Representative’s term of office,”; and

(II) by striking subparagraph (B).

(E) In section 11(a)(2) (sec. 1–1001.11(a)(2), D.C. Official Code), by striking “Delegate to the House of Representatives,” and inserting “Representative in Congress,”.

(F) In section 15(b) (sec. 1–1001.15(b), D.C. Official Code), by striking “Delegate,” and inserting “Representative in Congress,”.

(G) In section 17(a) (sec. 1–1001.17(a), D.C. Official Code), by striking “the Delegate to Congress from the District of Columbia” and inserting “the Representative in Congress”.

(b) REPEAL OF OFFICE OF STATEHOOD REPRESENTATIVE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 4 of the District of Columbia Statehood Constitutional Convention Initiative of 1979 (sec. 1–123, D.C. Official Code) is amended as follows:

(A) By striking “offices of Senator and Representative” each place it appears in subsection (d) and inserting “office of Senator”.

(B) In subsection (d)(2)—

(i) by striking “a Representative or”;

(ii) by striking “the Representative or”;

(iii) by striking “Representative shall be elected for a 2-year term and each”.

(C) In subsection (d)(3)(A), by striking “and 1 United States Representative”.

(D) By striking “Representative or” each place it appears in subsections (e), (f), (g), and (h).

(E) By striking “Representative’s or” each place it appears in subsections (g) and (h).

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(A) STATEHOOD COMMISSION.—Section 6 of such Initiative (sec. 1–125, D.C. Official Code) is amended—

(i) in subsection (a)—

(I) by striking “27 voting members” and inserting “26 voting members”;

(II) by adding “and” at the end of paragraph (5); and

(III) by striking paragraph (6) and redesignating paragraph (7) as paragraph (6); and

(ii) in subsection (a–1)(1), by striking subparagraph (H).

(B) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 8 of such Initiative (sec. 1–127, D.C. Official Code) is amended by striking “and House”.

(C) APPLICATION OF HONORARIA LIMITATIONS.—Section 4 of D.C. Law 8–135 (sec. 1–131, D.C. Official Code) is amended by striking “or Representative” each place it appears.

(D) APPLICATION OF CAMPAIGN FINANCE LAWS.—Section 3 of the Statehood Convention Procedural Amendments Act of 1982 (sec. 1–135, D.C. Official Code) is amended by striking “and United States Representative”.

(E) DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA ELECTIONS CODE OF 1955.—The District of Columbia Elections Code of 1955 is amended—

(i) in section 2(13) (sec. 1–1001.02(13), D.C. Official Code), by striking “United States Senator and Representative,” and inserting “United States Senator,”; and

(ii) in section 10(d) (sec. 1–1001.10(d)(3), D.C. Official Code), by striking “United States Representative or”.

(3) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this subsection shall take effect on the date on which a Representative from the District of Columbia takes office.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS REGARDING APPOINTMENTS TO SERVICE ACADEMIES.—

(1) UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY.—Section 4342 of title 10, United States Code, is amended—

(A) in subsection (a), by striking paragraph (5); and

(B) in subsection (f), by striking “the District of Columbia,”.

(2) UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY.—Such title is amended—

(A) in section 6954(a), by striking paragraph (5); and

(B) in section 6958(b), by striking “the District of Columbia,”.

(3) UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY.—Section 9342 of title 10, United States Code, is amended—

(A) in subsection (a), by striking paragraph (5); and

(B) in subsection (f), by striking “the District of Columbia,”.

(4) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This subsection and the amendments made by this subsection shall take effect on the date on which a Representative from the District of Columbia takes office.

SEC. 7. NONSEVERABILITY OF PROVISIONS AND NONAPPLICABILITY.

(a) NONSEVERABILITY.—If any provision of section 2(a)(1), 2(b)(1), or 3 or any amendment made by those sections is declared or held invalid or unenforceable by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remaining provisions of this Act or any amendment made by this Act shall be treated and deemed invalid and shall have no force or effect of law.

(b) NONAPPLICABILITY.—Nothing in the Act shall be construed to affect the first reapportionment occurring after the regular decennial census conducted for 2010 if this Act has not taken effect.

SEC. 8. JUDICIAL REVIEW.

If any action is brought to challenge the constitutionality of any provision of this Act or any amendment made by this Act, the following rules shall apply:

(1) The action shall be filed in the District Court of the United States for the District of Columbia and shall be heard by a 3-judge court convened pursuant to section 2284 of title 28, United States Code.

(2) A copy of the complaint shall be delivered promptly to the Clerk of the House of Representatives and the Secretary of the Senate.

(3) A final decision in the action shall be reviewable only by appeal directly to the Supreme Court of the United States. Such appeal shall be taken by the filing of a notice of appeal within 10 days, and the filing of a jurisdictional statement within 30 days, of the entry of the final decision.

(4) It shall be the duty of the District Court of the United States for the District of Columbia and the Supreme Court of the United States to advance on the docket and to expedite to the greatest possible extent the disposition of the action and appeal.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF HILDA L. SOLIS TO BE SECRETARY OF LABOR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will go into executive session and the clerk will report the nomination.

The assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of HILDA L. SOLIS, of California, to be Secretary of Labor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time on this nomination will be equally divided until 4:30 p.m. today.

The Senator from Washington is recognized.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, the Senate is not in order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator will suspend. The Senate will be in order. The Senator from Washington is recognized.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, the business before the Senate is now the nomination of President Obama’s nominee as Secretary of Labor, U.S. Representative HILDA SOLIS.

My colleagues on the Senate HELP Committee worked together to move forward HILDA SOLIS’s nomination. I have come to the floor today to urge the full Senate to join me in supporting her confirmation so we can fill this critically important Cabinet position as soon as possible.

Today, America’s families are facing incredible challenges. They are struggling with record unemployment and a devastating economic crisis. They need and they deserve an advocate in the administration who is passionate about public service and committed to fighting for them. Representative SOLIS is that person. I want to share today a part of her HELP Committee testimony. If confirmed, HILDA SOLIS wrote that we have her solemn commitment to “work hard every day to ensure that middle-class families do not lose hope.”

I thank Representative SOLIS for her willingness to answer President Obama’s call to serve. She has been very responsive to the questions that were submitted to her by the HELP Committee. She has been a dedicated public servant, and she has an extensive public record of supporting working families. Moving forward on this nomination this afternoon will send a crucial message to working families that we understand their needs and that they are absolutely essential to our economic recovery efforts. We cannot afford to wait.

For anyone who is unfamiliar with her background, I would like to share with you a little bit about Representative SOLIS. She was born in California and grew up as one of seven children. Her mother was an immigrant from Nicaragua. Her father worked as a farmworker, a railroad worker, and a Teamsters shop steward in a battery recycling plant. He raised his family to understand that joining a union had helped them secure a place in America’s middle class. Her parents stressed values such as education and hard work, public service and commitment to family.

Even though they could not afford to go to college themselves, her mother and father sacrificed to make sure their children would reach their full potential.

With the support of her family and the help of Pell grants and student loans, HILDA SOLIS became the first in her family to graduate from college. Her sisters followed in her footsteps. One earned a Ph.D. in public health and two others became engineers. Thanks to the values she grew up with, HILDA SOLIS always worked to give back to her community. She has served as the director of the California Student Opportunity and Access Program, and as a college trustee, because she wanted to ensure that other students

could have the same opportunity she did to get a college degree.

In 1992 she expanded her service to the public arena and was elected to the California State Assembly. In 1994, she became the first Latino State senator in California. As a State lawmaker, she wrote a record 17 laws to protect victims of domestic violence. She championed worker rights. She helped small businesses, and she worked to strengthen the economy.

HILDA SOLIS's achievements and service to students, to her State, and to the U.S. House of Representatives are proof that anything is possible in America, no matter what your background is. She is an example of why we have to ensure that every child and every family has a chance to succeed. Her experience is a quintessential example of the American dream. I should add I feel a very close connection to her because her background is not that different from my own. I too am one of seven children of loving, committed parents who taught us that with hard work anything is possible in America. My family faced very tough times when I was young. When my dad developed MS, we depended on food stamps for a while. My brothers, sisters, and I all were able to go on for college because of Pell grants and student loans.

Like HILDA SOLIS, I grew up believing that everyone can succeed if we give them a fighting chance. That is part of the reason why I know she will join me in fighting day and night for our working families in our struggling economy today.

Not only is HILDA SOLIS the right choice to serve as Labor Secretary, I want to emphasize how critical it is for us to move forward and fill this Cabinet position. For the last 8 years, working families have felt like an afterthought of the previous administration. I can tell you, as chair of the Employment and Workplace Safety Committee, it is long past time for a change. I am hopeful that the Department of Labor will soon have a leader who stands ready to help the Department fulfill its very core responsibilities to America's working men and women.

For years, I have said, if you do not invest in the growth and development of America's workforce, our families, our communities and our Nation will suffer in the long run. Now, today, with the unemployment at 7.6 percent, with 3 million jobs lost over the past year, and literally thousands of more pink slips going out every month, with hundreds of thousands of new unemployment insurance claims being filed every week, workers need an advocate in the new administration who will stand up for them. They need someone who believes, as I do, that investing in them is investing in our future. They need someone who believes that their Government should work for them during the good times and help them succeed during the hard times. They need someone who will be their voice in every economic recovery discussion.

As we all work very hard to help our economy recover and grow again, I believe three things are very clear: First, we need to create new jobs and help Americans who are out of work or underemployed find employment that ensures they are able to stay in the middle class.

Secondly, we need to help low-skilled and low-earning workers get the skills they need to find family wage jobs in healthy industries, so they can become part of the middle class.

And, third, we need to make smart investments that will create jobs, increase worker training, and make us more productive and competitive in the global economy. I am confident that as Labor Secretary, HILDA SOLIS will join me in working to reach those goals.

Our working families deserve a workforce system that is innovative, that is modern, and can meet the needs of the millions of unemployed and underemployed American workers. I am confident she is committed to making the reauthorization of our Nation's workforce system a top priority of her first year.

I look forward to working with her to help ensure families can balance the competing needs of work and home by expanding job-protected leave and other family-friendly work policies.

To be fully productive, workers need to know that their employers and their Government are doing everything they can to ensure they are safe and they are healthy on the job.

Finally, I look forward to working with her to make OSHA and MSHA proactive agencies again where the health and the safety of our workers is their first priority. We have a lot of big challenges ahead of us in this country, but we also have a very big opportunity.

I know that together we can help our workers access training for 21st century careers, including the emerging green jobs we hear so much about; we can help our workers balance the needs of home and careers and help them keep safe on the job. We can work to protect their rights to organize and secure a better economic future for themselves; and, ultimately, we can help our working families improve their quality of life.

Now, more than ever, workers deserve a leader who is dedicated to seeing them succeed. I look forward to working with Secretary SOLIS and the Department to do that. I encourage all of our colleagues to support this critical nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming is recognized.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I want to follow the comments of the Senator from Washington, being the ranking member on the committee that worked on this nomination. I thank Senator KENNEDY, Senator MURRAY, and other Senators on the committee for their help, cooperation, and due diligence on this matter.

I would be remiss if I did not thank Secretary Elaine Chao for the effort she put in during the time she was in office. I would mention that she made some of the first changes to OSHA and we made the first change in MSHA in 28 years while she was in office. It was a very bipartisan effort that we made, worked on both sides of the aisle, and done in 6 weeks, which is a record time for any of the committees around here to go through the regular process. There are other things we need to do in both OSHA and MSHA. I hope we have a chance to work on that.

I am here today to discuss the nomination of Representative HILDA SOLIS to serve as Secretary of Labor. This nomination followed regular order and worked through the committee process. Carefully reviewing nominations for Cabinet positions through the regular order is critical to fulfilling our constitutional advice and consent obligations.

As Senators, one of our most important responsibilities is confirming qualified and hopefully superior nominees to lead our executive agencies. In order to fulfill our responsibilities under the advice and consent clause properly, we have developed a process for vetting the President's nominees, all Presidents' nominees.

This vetting process typically includes a committee hearing, which encompasses a review of the nominee's credentials; a background check to screen for conflicts of interest, often related to financial holdings or associations with outside groups; followed by a markup and floor consideration, which is what we are doing today.

I am pleased that we are proceeding in this fashion with respect to the nominee for the Secretary of Labor. Representative SOLIS has a diverse background and a compelling personal story. Her life is one that epitomizes the American dream. Her dedication to public service is admirable, and it should serve as an example to young people everywhere.

Once confirmed, as chief Labor official, she is charged with overseeing job training programs, private pension plans, veterans employment and training issues, protecting America's workers' occupational safety and health, as well as ensuring mine safety and health, to name a very few of the things.

The Labor Secretary manages an annual budget of approximately \$53 billion and nearly 17,000 full-time employees. Unfortunately, based on my review of her background, I am concerned about a lack of management experience that is needed to meet the demands of the job, even though I recognize that it is the President's prerogative in selecting his Cabinet.

In reviewing this nomination, we followed the same due diligence and background check that we follow for all nominees in both this administration and the previous administration. Unfortunately, we were not able to act on

this nomination for over a month because the nominee had numerous errors and omissions in the documents she filed with the committee in her application, as well as the financial disclosures to the House of Representatives, going back several years, and the Office of Government Ethics.

Because of these errors, we had to reconstruct her application and her financial statements to remove the possibility of any conflict of interest. If we had not faced these paperwork problems, we probably would have been able to vote on her nomination in January.

One of the conflict of interest issues that concerns me most is Representative SOLIS's position as a treasurer, a position with fiduciary responsibilities, of a 501(c)(4), a not-for-profit lobbying firm. As an accountant and the co-author of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, I can assure my colleagues that there is no such thing as an "honorary" treasurer of a 501(c)(4) organization that lobbies Congress. So-called "honorary" positions are reserved for board of director positions on 501(c)(3) charitable organizations but not positions with a fiduciary responsibility, such as treasurers or general counsels for 501(c)(4) groups.

I was also deeply troubled to learn that this entity has filed lobbying disclosure paperwork with the House of Representatives that shows it lobbies in support of bills that Representative SOLIS cosponsored and in which she would be involved as the top Labor official in the executive branch.

To address these concerns, I have obtained from Representative SOLIS a sworn affidavit that she has no check-writing or signing authority as treasurer for this 501(c)(4) entity, nor does she have any control over the ability to control this entity's expenditures for campaign ads. This affidavit goes a long way to showing that no conflict of interest appears to have taken place.

In addition, the entity has filed amended filings with the Federal Election Commission that do not list Representative SOLIS as being responsible for any monies going toward the campaign ads.

To avoid any future conflict of interest, I hope and expect that Speaker PELOSI will immediately amend the House ethics rules to prohibit Members of Congress from serving in a position of fiduciary responsibility for 501(c)(4) board organizations. It is a blatant conflict of interest, not allowed in the Senate, and the House of Representatives should prohibit it immediately.

Additionally, the press recently reported that there were unpaid tax liens related to Representative SOLIS's husband's small auto repair business. It now appears that all of the outstanding liens are paid, and all of them were her husband's liens. I have obtained a letter from the County of Los Angeles treasurer and tax collector verifying that the county liens have been released.

My staff also held a conference call with officials from the State of Cali-

fornia and received word that all outstanding state liens have been released. Of equal importance, I am concerned that Representative SOLIS simply failed to fully respond to a host of very basic labor policy questions posed at the committee in the hearing and in writing.

The nominee dodged legitimate questions relating to the Employee Free Choice Act, right-to-work laws, employment standards, and overtime regulations, to name a few. This is not a nomination for a judicial position where a nominee quite understandably should not be expected to respond to hypotheticals involving cases that might come before her. This is a policy post, and policy questions deserve full answers from any nominee. I am disappointed that we did not receive them, and equally disappointed that her reticence to discuss them precluded us from having a more thoughtful and necessary discussion of her views.

I was very disappointed when President Obama issued an executive order that discriminates against the 94.7 percent of the construction workers in Wyoming who are nonunion members, and 84.4 percent of construction workers nationwide. The order reverses the Bush policy of neutrality on Government contracts and instead encourages agencies to require their private contractors to engage in collective bargaining agreements on contracts of \$25 million or more. During the confirmation proceedings, I asked the nominee whether she would support the neutral Bush policy. Her response was that she had not studied it nor participated in discussions about repealing it. Now that it has been repealed, I hope she will study the issue closely and urge the administration not to further expand the executive order to smaller contracts.

I am very concerned that the administration is choosing to limit access to good construction projects at a time when construction unemployment is extremely high and a tremendous amount of taxpayer dollars is being spent on building projects. In many communities, the only construction projects bid on may well be Federal and not be restricted to 15.6 percent of construction workers who are unionized. This policy excludes many small and local contractors and also disadvantages women and minority employees who are less likely to be union members. Reserving the spoils of the stimulus bill for large unionized contractors seems to me the exact wrong policy for the current economic crisis. I hope Secretary Solis will take a careful study of these concerns and advise the administration that a neutral policy achieves the most equitable result and, even more importantly, will ensure that taxpayers get the most for their money.

Finally, I would also like to mention that prior to her hearing, Representative SOLIS and I discussed the Workforce Investment Act and how we need

to reauthorize it immediately. I have been working on that for about 4 years, and we passed it unanimously through the Senate before, and it would train 900,000 workers for higher skilled jobs. I do not understand why we cannot get it through both bodies and get it conferred and get it enacted. Instead of training people to get higher skilled jobs, we keep sending the jobs over to India and China and other places. So at a time when our economy is being challenged to create jobs that will bolster our infrastructure and our competitive edge in the 21st century, the skills of our workforce have not kept pace. We cannot afford to overlook the importance of providing lifelong access to quality education and training in our workforce. That is why I strongly believe we must renew and improve the Workforce Investment Act. Governors from States all over ask for more flexibility so they can actually use the money in that act. That is a law that would help provide American workers with the skills necessary to compete in the global economy.

I look forward to working with Representative SOLIS in her new Cabinet position as Secretary of Labor, and her staff, on this and many other labor and economic issues facing our country.

I know Members of the Senate are anxious to have a permanent Labor Secretary in place. I am too. It took longer than I would have liked to complete the necessary vetting, and, again, I wish to thank all my colleagues for their patience and help in allowing us to work through the regular order to ensure we fulfill our duties under the Constitution. Now that we have done our due diligence, we can move to have this nomination confirmed.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the following documents: the affidavit from Representative SOLIS stating she did not have check-signing authority for American Rights at Work or control of their lobbying or campaign expenditures; and a statement from the Los Angeles County treasurer and Tax Collector's office stating that all liens relating to Representative SOLIS' husband's small business have been released.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

DECLARATION OF HILDA SOLIS

1. My name is Hilda Solis.
2. From 2004 to 2007 I served as a board member and the treasurer of the nonprofit organization American Rights at Work (ARW).
3. At no time did I have authority to sign checks or make expenditures on behalf of ARW.
4. At no time did I control or have the ability to control ARW's lobbying or campaign expenditures.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on February ____, 2009, in Washington, DC.

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES,
TREASURER AND TAX COLLECTOR,
Los Angeles, CA, February 10, 2009.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: A search of our records reveals that all unsecured property taxes due as of February 10, 2009, have been paid in full and the associated liens filed in connection with the following names have been released:

Sams Fore Lessee
Sayyad, Sam
Sayyad, Sam DBA Sam's Auto Center

There were no liens filed by the Tax Collector under Sam's Foreign and Domestic Auto.

Should you need any further information, please contact me directly at (213) 893-7968.

Very truly yours,

MARK J. SALADINO,
*Treasurer and Tax
Collector.*

KATHY WATERS,
Operations Chief, Revenue and Enforcement Division.

Mr. ENZI. I thank the Presiding Officer and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I would like to speak 6 or 7 minutes as in morning business, but I also would like to ask—if there is nobody on the other side of the aisle who would intervene—if I could have another 15 minutes after this time. I do not wish to take advantage of anything, but if they do not know of any other people from the Democratic Party who wish to speak, I would like to speak longer. But right now I ask unanimous consent for 6 or 7 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I forget. This is for my first 5 or 6 minutes?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa is correct.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. GRASSLEY are printed in today's RECORD under "Morning Business.")

Mr. GRASSLEY. Now, Mr. President, if I could proceed to that other speech. If there are people from the other party, from the majority party, who come to the Chamber, I will be glad to yield the floor at the time of their appearance.

(The remarks of Mr. GRASSLEY pertaining to the introduction of S. 458 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

RECESS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate stand in recess under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:28 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. CARPER).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington is recognized.

NOMINATION OF HILDA L. SOLIS, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE SECRETARY OF LABOR—Continued

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, we are on the Solis nomination this afternoon.

I ask unanimous consent that the following Senators on our side be recognized to speak: Senator MENENDEZ for 10 minutes, Senator SANDERS for 15 minutes, Senator DODD for 15 minutes, and Senator BOXER for 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. To speak in that order?

Mrs. MURRAY. No. These Senators requested that time, and we will go back and forth in the usual fashion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from New Jersey is recognized.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise today to give my strong support to President Obama's choice to lead the Department of Labor.

It is hard to stress enough how urgent it is for us to have a Labor Secretary at work in the face of this economic crisis: 3.6 million Americans have lost their jobs since this recession began in December of 2007—almost 600,000 in the last month alone—workers are losing their health care, their pensions, and their life savings.

The American men and women who have been damaged the worst by the financial crisis we have had—the worst financial crisis in generations—need full unemployment benefits to carry their families through this period of transition and the benefit of job training to be able to meet the challenges of the 21st century economy.

Those who still have a job to go to every day need a champion for their rights and their safety. As the American people struggle through these difficult economic times, it is more important than ever to have a fully functioning and fully staffed Department of Labor.

At this moment, we need a Secretary of Labor who believes workers should not be intimidated when they try to organize. We need a Secretary of Labor who believes that after decades of stagnation, it is time for wages to rise. We need a Secretary of Labor who believes it is not acceptable for women to make 78 cents for every dollar a man earns, for African Americans to earn 80 cents and Latinos to earn 68 cents for every dollar their white counterparts earn.

Some will argue that a recession is an inconvenient time to pay workers a fair wage or to protect them from exposure to dangerous chemicals because the economy will suffer under the weight of additional benefits or rights for employees. We need a Secretary who understands how false that argument is.

For 8 years, we have seen administration policies punish workers for their efforts and treat their rights in a way that ultimately can't sustain their hopes, dreams, aspirations, and their families.

The Bush administration virtually gutted the Department of Labor, drastically cutting its budget, choosing instead to trust CEOs and big business to look after the welfare of workers. In 8 years, the Department issued only one worker safety rule on its own accord. While the Department was neglecting to address safety in the workplace, it focused its attention on helping corporate interests weaken the rules for overtime compensation. After 8 years, we have seen who actually benefits from these policies: No one.

We now know that being pro-labor is pro-economic growth. We know a rising tide of wages can lift the ships of business as well, as American workers are also the customers who purchase our products and services. It is time we acted on a clear principle: An economy that works is an economy that works for everyone.

I can think of no one better to take up the challenge than HILDA SOLIS. She has the best interests of American workers in her heart and her blood. She is the daughter of union workers, the first in her family to go to college. I had the privilege of serving with her in the House of Representatives. She has served the people of southern California in Congress for 8 years, not just advocating for their rights but for recovery, not just expanded help for workers but creating jobs to expand the workforce. She knows that with the right investments, we will fuel the creation of millions of green jobs, bring down energy costs and end our dependence on foreign oil.

She has won friends on both sides of the aisle, and even when they don't agree with her on every issue, they cannot help but respect her work ethic, her intelligence, and her integrity. I know very much so that she is eminently capable to lead the Department of Labor. Also people throughout the country cannot help but admire history in the making. HILDA SOLIS would be the first Latina to hold the position of Secretary in a President's Cabinet. That is incredibly powerful for young Latinas across this country, a growing part of America's population who will look to a HILDA SOLIS and say that in fact everything is possible.

I look forward to voting to confirm her today because America's workforce and our economy cannot afford to wait.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida is recognized.

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from New Jersey for supporting the nomination of HILDA SOLIS to be President Obama's choice to lead the Department of Labor. I too rise in support of this nomination. Having served in a President's Cabinet myself and gone through this arduous and difficult process of confirmation, I adhere to the principle that a President should get the right to nominate his Cabinet and should have the opportunity to name the people he chooses to work with. It is, obviously, up to the