

... Trump record on worker safety

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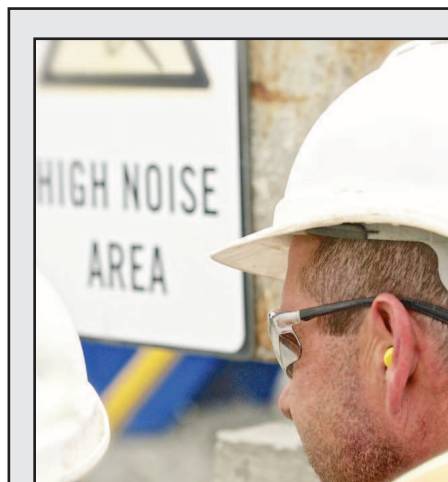
“Health and safety regulations are written in the blood of working people,” CWA President Chris Shelton said in a press statement about the lawsuit, “and this executive order treats those lifesaving rules like bargaining chips. Essentially, it tells workers: ‘If you want to be free from asbestos, you’ll need to contend with lead poisoning or infectious disease.’”

Deregulation might sound good in the abstract

In his campaign and in office, Trump’s constant narrative has been that regulations are burdensome. Many Americans agree in the abstract yet disagree when they learn the details. That’s because when it comes to regulations, there are burdens either way. Take toxins: You could require employers to shoulder the burden of preventing worker exposure to hazardous substances, or you could let workers suffer the burden of debilitating and fatal diseases.

Even though OSHA strives to find the most practical, cost-effective methods of preventing occupational injuries and diseases, business groups mount major political and legal fights against new requirements.

For example, late in 2016, the



Exposure to loud noise on the job doesn’t just cause hearing loss. According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), it’s also associated with high blood pressure and high cholesterol. Too much information? Congress has now twice rejected a proposal by the Trump Administration to cut NIOSH’s annual budget by more than \$100 million.

Obama-era OSHA announced a new rule: To improve the effectiveness of OSHA investigations, employers would have to accurately record injuries in the workplace and keep those records for five years. Business groups said that was too burdensome. In early 2017, the Republican Congress passed a bill striking down the rule, and Trump signed it into law.

The lawsuit continues

In its lawsuit, CWA asks the court to declare Trump’s order unlawful and bar agencies from implementing it. But that hasn’t happened yet. On Feb. 26, 2018, a federal district court judge ruled that CWA and the other groups don’t have standing to sue because they didn’t identify

particular members who would be harmed. The judge didn’t reject the merits of their argument, however, and he left the door open for them to show that concrete harm has been done. The groups filed further arguments April 2.

Since Trump issued the “one in, two out” executive order, progress on new rules to protect workers appears to have halted. More than a dozen prospective rules have been taken off the official list of new regulations being developed by OSHA and the Mine Safety and Health Administration, including standards on combustible dust, workplace violence, infectious diseases, noise in construction, styrene,

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