

March 2020

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
House Appropriations Committee
Labor, HHS, Education Appropriations
Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Labor, HHS, Education Appropriations
Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole:

As you work to craft the FY 21 Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill, we urge you to support funding for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) at a minimum of \$677.4 million. This amount would restore OSHA's authorized staffing levels to 2,335 and provide the same level of funding (adjusted for inflation) and personnel authorized in 2010. We also ask that you support funding for the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), including its Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (AgFF) sector program, Education and Research Centers (ERCs) and the Total Worker Health (TWH) program, at a minimum of \$354.8 million. This funding level includes \$28.5 million for AgFF, \$32 million for the ERCs, and at least level funding for TWH.

On a typical day, over 12,000 U.S. workers sustain injuries on the job that are serious enough to require medical consultation; 12 workers die from an unintentional injury suffered at work.¹ These tragedies cost an estimated \$3.3 billion per week.²

OSHA ensures safe conditions for America's workers by setting and enforcing standards and providing training, outreach, education, and assistance to employers. OSHA regulations address issues such as the use of personal protective equipment, permissible exposure limits to hazardous materials, and industry-specific safety procedures. One of OSHA's most recognized cooperative programs, the Voluntary Protection Program, recognizes employers who successfully implement effective safety and health management systems and maintain injury and illness rates below the national average for their industries. The agency's On-Site Consultation Program offers free and confidential advice to small and medium-sized businesses.

NIOSH is the primary federal agency responsible for conducting research and making recommendations for the prevention of work-related illness and injury. NIOSH provides national leadership in the field by gathering information, conducting scientific research, and translating knowledge into products and services to support workplace safety.

NIOSH funding supports many important programs, including the AgFF, ERCs and TWH. The agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting industry preventable fatality rate is over 7 times that of the all-industry average.³ In 2018, over 17,000 workers in this sector were injured seriously enough to require time away from work, and 574 workers died.⁴ Furthermore, due to its

¹ injuryfacts.nsc.org

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

decentralized nature and diverse structure, the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector lags other industries in reducing the toll of work-related injuries and illnesses.

Directed by Congress, NIOSH established Centers for Agricultural Disease and Injury Research, Education and Prevention in 1990 in response to evidence that agricultural workers were suffering higher rates of injury and illness than other U.S. workers. Today, the initiative includes nine regional centers, and one national center to address children's farm safety. These centers have conducted research leading to evidence-based standards that save lives. It is the only substantive federal effort to ensure safe working conditions for workers in one of our nation's most vital production sectors.

With an aging occupational safety and health workforce, ERCs are essential for training the next generation of professionals. The Centers establish academic, labor and industry research partnerships to achieve these goals. Currently, the ERCs are responsible for supplying many of the country's occupational safety and health graduates who will go on to fill professional roles.

NIOSH supports education and research in occupational health through academic degree programs and research opportunities. The National Occupational Research Agenda continues to protect American workers through its work-related illness and injury research, and we urge that funding for this research continue. The TWH approach integrates workplace interventions that protect safety and health with activities that advance the overall well-being of workers.

In order to ensure the health and safety of our nation's workers, we respectfully request that you, at a minimum, fund OSHA at \$677.4 million and NIOSH at a minimum of \$354.8 million. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

ABSA International
American Association of Occupational Health Nurses
American Board for Occupational Health Nurses, Inc. (ABOHN)
American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine
American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA)
Board of Certified Safety Professionals
Board for Global EHS Credentialing (BCG)
Campbell Institute
Human Factors and Ergonomics Society
National Environmental Health Association
National Safety Council
ORCHSE Strategies, LLC
Safe States Alliance