**GA Update: 5th Annual National Safety Stand-Down around the corner, NIOSH releases strategic plan through 2023, the CSB survives FY 18 appropriations and gears up for another fight in FY 19**

**OSHA**

- OSHA has moved to delay the beryllium rule's effective date from March 21 to May 20, 2018. This delay was in accordance with a White house directive to push back regulations that would take effect early in the new president’s term.
- The House Subcommittee on Workforce Protections held a hearing last month with industry stakeholders to discuss how OSHA can be more collaborative and effective. “We want OSHA to be a partner, not an adversary,” said one witness.
- The 5th annual National Safety Stand-Down is coming up May 7-11. See the Construction section below for more info.

  - **OSHA's Safe + Sound Campaign** is gaining steam, with 100+ partners pledging to raise awareness and increase use of safety and health management systems. As a co-organizer, ASSE has some easy ways for ASSE member communities to get involved and advance safety in your community.

**NIOSH**

- NIOSH released its new strategic plan for years 2019-2023. NIOSH’s research will be organized into seven strategic goals that best represent the health and safety issues facing the U.S. workforce.
- NIOSH is now offering free, confidential screening for coal miners to provide early detection of coal workers’ pneumoconiosis (CPW), also known as black lung disease.
- ASSE is a Presenting Partner of NIOSH’s 2nd International Symposium to Advance Total Worker Health. Register here for this global gathering of practitioners and researchers in Bethesda, MD from May 8-11.
- The 7th National Occupational Injury Research Symposium (NOIRS) will be held October 16-18, 2018 in Morgantown, WV. NOIRS is the only national forum focused on occupational injury research and is co-sponsored by ASSE. The
theme for this year's symposium is: Advancing Worker Safety in the 21st Century Through Research and Practice.

Construction

- OSHA's 5th annual National Safety Stand-Down is coming up May 7-11. Falls are preventable and a leading cause of death for all workers, but particularly construction workers. In 2016 the construction industry saw 370 fatalities from falls. The National Safety Stand-Down raises awareness and provides an opportunity for employers and employees to address this issue at their worksite.
- Happening in tandem that week is Construction Safety Week 2018, an initiative developed by contractors and construction CEOs to reiterate their dedication to a shared culture of choosing safety every day.
- OSHA's Alliance Program Construction Roundtable (an offshoot of their National Alliance Program) also meets several times a year to discuss industry trends and mitigation strategies. ASSE's representative John Mroszczyk shares an update from their last meeting.
- The Center for Construction Research and Training (CPWR) recently worked with NIOSH to develop a database of NIOSH's FACE program. NIOSH's FACE program (Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation) conducts investigations of fatal occupational injuries. This provides access to the full text of hundreds of fatality investigation reports.
- The CPWR has rolling submissions for their CPWR Small Study Program, which "funds research studies limited in time and amount that focus on construction safety and health issues." Successful applicants can receive up to $30,000 for a study on a discrete topic to be completed within one year.
- The Carson J. Spencer Foundation along with the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention has created a Construction Industry Blueprint: Suicide Prevention in the Workplace

OSH Hodge Podge

- Late last week Congress passed and President Trump signed the FY 18 omnibus appropriations bill, aka the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018. For OSHA the bill provides an increase of $9.5 million, totaling $553 million (OSHA retains the Susan Harwood grants as well). NIOSH retains relatively flat funding and the CSB was not eliminated. This bill funds through September 30, 2018. The President's FY 19 budget proposal again proposes eliminating the Harwood Grants at OSHA and the entire CSB, as well as again cutting NIOSH's budget by 40% and (new for FY 19) moving NIOSH out of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and into the National Institutes of Health (NIH).
- Last month the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission ruled that citations from OSHA inspectors with expired credentials still stand.
In a rare point of bipartisan agreement, former Vice President Joe Biden, first daughter Ivanka Trump, and Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta spoke against occupational licensing at separate events last week. Biden criticized "impediments we put in place" with too much licensing specifically for veterans trying to reenter the workforce. Speaking to millennial voters at the Generation Next Summit Acosta and Ivanka Trump spoke out against over-licensure. Trump noting that one in five professions now require a license. claimed that over-licensing can stifle innovation and creativity. Acosta’s wariness of licensure has become a signature issue.

Whistleblowing

- OSHA's Whistleblower Protection Programs has issued Recommended Practices for Anti-Retaliation Programs to help promote safe workplaces, where workers feel comfortable voicing their concerns. These recommendations apply to all public and private sector employees covered by the whistle blower protection laws that OSHA enforces. The document outlines five key elements of an effective anti-retaliation program.
- The United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) has conducted a study regarding the role whistleblowers play in safeguarding the federal government, specifically the Contractor Whistleblower Protections Pilot Program. GAO documented that the program provided legal protections to contractor employees who believe that they have experienced reprisal because of disclosing certain wrongdoings.