



Cornell University  
ILR School

Cornell University ILR School  
**DigitalCommons@ILR**

---

Labor Unions

Key Workplace Documents

---

5-8-2012

# Legislative Alert: 2013 National Defense Authorization Bill

William Samuel  
*AFL-CIO*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/laborunions>

**Thank you for downloading an article from DigitalCommons@ILR.**

**Support this valuable resource today!**

---

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Key Workplace Documents at DigitalCommons@ILR. It has been accepted for inclusion in Labor Unions by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@ILR. For more information, please contact [hlmdigital@cornell.edu](mailto:hlmdigital@cornell.edu).

---

# Legislative Alert: 2013 National Defense Authorization Bill

## **Abstract**

[Excerpt] On behalf of the AFL-CIO, I write in opposition to provisions changing nuclear weapons worker health and safety programs that are included in the Ltouse Armed Services Committee's 2013 National Defense Authorization bill. These changes would seriously weaken worker safety & health protections at Department of Energy (DOE) nuclear weapons complexes.

## **Keywords**

AFL-CIO, Legislative Alert, 2013 National Defense Authorization Bill

## **Comments**

### **Suggested Citation**

Samuel, W. (2012, May 8). *Legislative Alert: 2013 National Defense Authorization Bill*. Washington, DC: AFL-CIO.

## **Required Publisher Statement**

Copyright by the AFL-CIO. Document posted with special permission by the copyright holder.



815 SIXTEENTH STREET, N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006

RICHARD L. TRUMKA  
PRESIDENT

ELIZABETH H. SHULER  
SECRETARY-TREASURER

ARLENE HOLT BAKER  
EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT

## **LEGISLATIVE ALERT!**

(202) 637-5057

May, 8 2012

Honorable Carl Levin, Chairman  
Senate Committee on Armed Services  
228 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Levin:

On behalf of the AFL-CIO, I write in opposition to provisions changing nuclear weapons worker health and safety programs that are included in the House Armed Services Committee's 2013 National Defense Authorization bill. These changes would seriously weaken worker safety & health protections at Department of Energy (DOE) nuclear weapons complexes.

Nuclear weapons facilities are particularly hazardous for workers. We have worked with DOE over the years to build an essential, integrated and effective worker health and safety program. It would be a mistake to transfer worker safety and health responsibilities from the DOE's Office of Health, Safety and Security (HSS) to the quasi-independent National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) which has no experience in occupational safety & health.

Shifting the entire safety & health program to NNSA would eliminate current DOE worker health and safety standards and enforcement and replace them with weaker standards and "performance-based" oversight. Contrary to claims that the bill would simply subject NNSA facilities to the same requirements as those under the Occupational Safety and Health Act, the bill would strip workers of all rights to be protected from retaliation for raising safety and health concerns, and the rights to be involved in workplace inspections. It would also eliminate any requirements for employers to record and report injuries and illnesses.

Nuclear weapons facilities are unlike and more hazardous than other workplaces and DOE has particular standards to address these hazards. For example, DOE order 850 has a standard regarding beryllium that is 10 times higher than the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) standard. DOE order 851 ensures that these sites have specific and proactive health and safety programs. The legislation would erase these important worker safety protections.

DOE weapons facilities have a long history of radioactive and toxic waste contamination and worker exposures that have resulted in thousands of cases of cancer and beryllium disease. These past failures have cost the government and taxpayers billions of dollars for environmental remediation and compensation.

The adoption of the House Armed Services provision would turn back the clock and allow a return to conditions and practices that caused these disasters. I strongly urge that these provisions be rejected and that worker safety and health programs be maintained at the DOE-HSS.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William Samuel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "William" being more prominent than the last name "Samuel".

William Samuel, Director  
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

cc: House Committee on Armed Services