

**TRI-VALLEY CARES' STAFF ATTORNEY HEADS TO WASHINGTON DC TO PETITION CONGRESS
ON BEHALF OF SICK LIVERMORE AND SANDIA LAB WORKERS**

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Tri-Valley CAREs' Staff Attorney, Scott Yundt, will be in our nation's capital next week with two objectives: 1) he will participate in the Alliance of Nuclear Worker Advocacy Groups (ANWAG) conference on behalf of the Lawrence Livermore National Lab (LLNL) and Sandia Livermore National Lab (SNL) Sick Worker Support Group for workers made ill by on-the-job exposures, and, 2) he will meet with members of Congress to advocate major changes to the Federal law intended to compensate sick and dying nuclear weapons complex workers and their families.

The biggest issue on the table will be passage of the *Charlie Wolf Act*, which seeks to reform the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act (EEOICPA) and is a crucial piece of legislation to ease the burden placed on former LLNL and SNL employees who have been made ill by on the job exposure and who seek compensation and medical benefits from the program.

Conference participants will submit petitions to Congress signed by hundreds of former nuclear workers and their families that call for the passage of the *Charlie Wolf Act* and for Congress to initiate oversight hearings to investigate the failed implementation of EEOICPA. Among the many issues workers want Congress to address is the creation of an advisory board to review the Department of Labor's (DOL) administration of EEOICPA. The Government Accountability Office recommended that DOL increase transparency with the creation of this advisory board in its March 2010 report to Congress.

Nearly 3500 claims for compensation and medical benefits under EEOICPA have been made by former employees of LLNL (another 350 claims have been made by former SNL employees). Unfortunately, due to the highly bureaucratic nature of claims process, the lack of proper record keeping on behalf of the Department of Energy, and the high burden placed on the claimant to prove exposure, less than one-third of the claims have been approved.

"I am going to DC to carry the message that sick workers from Livermore Lab and Sandia Livermore need help. Recognition of the deficiencies of EEOICPA has increased due to recent government and media reports. The time is ripe for major changes in this law," stated Scott

Yundt of Tri-Valley CAREs. "Support in Congress and the public for improvements to the program via the *Charlie Wolf Act* is mounting," he continued.

Workers made ill by on the job exposure to radiation and toxic chemicals at Department of Energy nuclear weapons facilities, like LLNL, "are sharing their stories of sickness and devastating loss. Everyone signing the Petition supporting the Charlie Wolf Act shares a core desire: To see justice served for the people that were made terribly sick while building bombs for the United States," stated Arin Billings, creator of the *Charlie Wolf Act Petition*. "The United States government has employed over 700,000 Americans to build nuclear bombs since 1942. We have a powerful voice and we will not give up. Sickened nuclear weapons workers and their survivors need swift passage of the *CHARLIE WOLF ACT*."

"The need for a DOL advisory board is long overdue. Under EEOICPA many compensation decisions are approved or denied based on Site Exposure Matrix database. While the database is useful in some cases, due to the lack of complete information many claimants are being unjustly denied compensation," stated Jan Lovelace, ANWAG representative and survivor claimant. "The *Charlie Wolf Act* needs to be passed."

"Congress needs to investigate whether the current NIOSH policy of favoring the individual dose reconstruction program over the far less burdensome Special Exposure Cohort (SEC) program is fiscally responsible. Congress must figure out if the high administrative costs associated with the dose reconstruction program should be abandoned in favor of the far less complex SEC program championed within the *Charlie Wolf Act* that would eliminate such costly expenses," stated Antoinette Bonsignore, Linde Ceramics SEC Action Group and ANWAG representative.

EEOICPA was enacted by Congress in 2000 to compensate sickened nuclear weapons workers. After nearly ten years it is far past time for Congress to figure out why this program has failed to deliver basic fairness and justice for so many thousands of these sickened workers. ANWAG calls upon Congress to do the just thing and swiftly pass the *Charlie Wolf Act* and create the DOL oversight board.

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