



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

July 29, 2010
(House Rules)

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY
H.R. 5851 - Offshore Oil and Gas Worker Whistleblower Protection Act of 2010
(Rep. Miller, D – California and Rep. Markey, D – Massachusetts)

The Administration strongly supports House passage of H.R. 5851, the “Offshore Oil and Gas Worker Whistleblower Protection Act of 2010,” because it would provide important whistleblower protections to workers on the Outer Continental Shelf.

All workers should be able to protect their health and safety by reporting violations of the law or workplace hazards without fear of retaliation from their employers. These protections are particularly important for workers whose lives depend on their employers’ assurances of their safety. Congressional hearings have revealed that workers on the Deepwater Horizon offshore oil drilling platform had significant safety concerns, but feared they would lose their jobs if they spoke out. Whistleblower protections must be meaningful so that workers feel secure enough to speak up when they see hazards going unaddressed.

There is currently no Federal law adequately protecting offshore workers who blow the whistle on worker health and safety hazards. While there are some protections for workers who blow the whistle on environmental or pipeline safety violations, these are not uniform. H.R. 5851 would extend strong whistleblower protections to workers on the Outer Continental Shelf, including workers who are part of a drilling or spill clean-up operation. The bill would accomplish this by prohibiting retaliation against workers who, among other things, report violations relating to the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act or refuse to perform their duties based on the good faith belief that the work could result in injury or illness, or could cause public harm, such as an oil spill. H.R. 5851 also would provide that any covered worker who is a victim of retaliation be made whole by reinstatement, back pay, and compensatory and punitive damages.

For these reasons, the Administration strongly supports H.R. 5851, and urges its swift passage.

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