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Labor Department

**Maxwell Tapped as Senior Adviser to Solis,
Will Work With White House Task Force**

Mary Beth Maxwell, executive director of American Rights at Work, has been tapped as a senior adviser to Labor Secretary Hilda Solis, the advocacy group announced April 24.

In her new position, Maxwell, who has been leading the charge for passage of the Employee Free Choice Act (H.R. 1409, S. 560), a bill that would make it easier for workers to organize, will work primarily with the White House Task Force on Middle Class Working Families, according to the announcement.

A Labor Department spokeswoman confirmed that as a senior DOL adviser, Maxwell will work with the task force, an administration initiative whose goals include raising the living standards of middle class families by restoring labor standards, improving workplace safety, enhancing work and family balance, protecting retirement security, and protecting middle and working class incomes. Solis is a member of the task force, which is chaired by Vice President Biden (19 DLR AA-1, 2/2/09).

Prior to Solis's nomination, Maxwell had been considered as a contender for the labor secretary position, having received the support of former Rep. David Bonier (D-Mich.), who at the time was serving as an adviser to President Obama (225 DLR A-1, 11/21/08).

Bonier, who is ARAW's president, said in a statement that Maxwell's "knowledge and experience will aid the administration and the Labor Department in supporting [efforts to enact the Employee Free Choice Act] and other policies to benefit working families throughout the country."

With Maxwell's departure, ARAW Deputy Director Kimberly Freeman will serve as acting executive director of the organization.

In a statement in response to the appointment, AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney said, "It is a great day for America's working families who gain yet another strong advocate in the Obama Administration."

Sweeney said Maxwell's appointment "clearly spotlights the priority this Administration puts on working men and women's issues, especially in today's economy. The union movement looks forward to continuing to work with her in her new role to create good-paying jobs, restore workplace standards and safety rules, and reform our nation's broken and outdated labor laws," he added.

Change to Win federation Chair Anna Burger praised Maxwell for dedicating her career to "protecting and strengthening workers rights," adding that "we are confident she will continue to bring this same commitment and vigor in her new role as senior advisor."

In a statement provided to BNA, Burger said Maxwell's appointment "places yet another strong woman leader and pro-worker advocate in the Obama Administration and reinforces the high priority of the Administration to address the issues most important to working families."