

ANWAG DECRIES LABOR OFFICIALS TREATING SICK NUCLEAR WEAPONS WORKERS CLAIMS AS A GAME TO PROVE THEY ARE SMARTER THAN CLAIMANTS; CALLS FOR HEARINGS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 24, 2017

Contact: Terrie Barrie, 970-824-2260, tbarrieanwag@gmail.com
Janet Michel, 865-966-5918, jrmichel@tds.net
David Manuta, Ph.D., FAIC, 740-947-7998, dmanuta@dmanuta.com
Deb Jerison, 937-767-2890, deb@eecap.org

Craig, CO – The Alliance of Nuclear Worker Advocacy Groups (ANWAG) is gratified yet dismayed that the concerns we have raised for over thirteen years to three administrations have been confirmed by a Department of Labor (DOL) whistleblower. On July 21, 2017, the Washington Free Beacon published a report where the DOL insider brought charges of malfeasance towards claimant under the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program (EEOICP), <https://goo.gl/53DmSs>

“I’m appalled and outraged by the mean-spiritedness of some of the people responsible for administering what was intended to be a compassionate compensation program,” stated Terrie Barrie, ANWAG Founding Member. “It’s a slap in the face of every worker who put his life on the line to protect our country. A full investigation into the program to determine whether claims have been adjudicated in good faith and based on the evidence is necessary.”

“I applaud Attorney Silbeger for sharing his experiences with the public. This issue must be investigated and any DOL employee who obstructed claimants’ rights to fair adjudication needs to be removed,” Deb Jerison, Director of Energy Employees Claimant Assistance Project commented. “It is clear that even with the Advisory Board on Toxic Substances and Worker Health, DEEOIC needs additional oversight. The Board and the Ombudsman’s Office should be given additional power to stop this type of abuse from occurring in the future. Any claims which were tainted by DOL’s abuse need to be reopened and fairly adjudicated.”

“I’m amazed and heartened to see a DOL employee speak publicly on the brazen transgressions within the agency. We, the workers and advocates, knew it would be an uphill battle when Elaine Chao initially refused to host the program at DOL and delayed for many months implementing EEOICPA program regulations,” said Janet Michel, ANWAG Founding Member. “ANWAG has repeatedly brought to the attention of Congress and DOL management the ill will of DOL employees toward claimants and delaying tactics in all aspects of program implementation. It is past time for Congress to take action since DOL has shown it is incapable of policing itself.”

“There are many EEOICPA Claimants who will want to hug Ms. Crabtree for her succinct portrayal of a Federal Agency failing in its Mission,” stated Dr. David Manuta, EEOICPA Authorized Representative, expert witness, ANWAG member and President of Manuta Chemical Consulting, Inc. “The EEOICPA is an allegedly tone-deaf organization that has needed to be publicly shamed. Maybe this piece is the catalyst that will re-orient the EEOICPA to its Mission of helping our atomic veterans.”

ANWAG will be asking Congress to hold hearings in the very near future to determine if DOL is fulfilling their obligation to compensate workers, or their survivors, for illnesses Department of Energy nuclear weapons workers contracted from exposures to radiation and other toxic substances.

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