



Trump to nominate Eugene Scalia as labor secretary

Louise Esola

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Renowned pro-business attorney Eugene Scalia is President Donald Trump's selection for secretary of labor, according to a tweet posted by the president late Thursday.

Mr. Scalia, the son of the late Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, was selected to replace Alexander Acosta, who resigned July 19 after serving for two years and facing recent calls for his resignation due to his handling of a case involving registered sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

President Trump's latest appointment to head the U.S. Department of Labor worked as an attorney with that department under the George W. Bush administration, when the then-president signed off on a repeal of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's ergonomics standard a year after Mr. Scalia penned a commentary for the Cato Institute calling the standard that subjected employers to citations and fines for not ensuring safe workspaces for mostly white-collar office employees "the most costly and intrusive regulation in its history."

"The agency's 'ergonomics' rule would require businesses to slow the pace of production, hire more workers, increase rest periods and redesign workstations or even entire operations," he wrote for the libertarian Washington policy group's publication in 2000.

Mr. Scalia is currently a partner in the Washington office of Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP and co-chair of the law firm's administrative law and regulatory practice group. His bio on the firm's website outlines his long history of challenging regulations and federal agencies, and successfully representing large employers such as Walmart Inc., Ford Motor Co. and Boeing Co.

"Gene has led a life of great success in the legal and labor field and is highly respected not only as a lawyer, but as a lawyer with great experience" working "with labor and everyone else," President Trump wrote of Scalia in his Twitter announcement.

Michael Billok, a Saratoga Springs, New York, labor attorney with Bond, Schoeneck & King PLLC who worked with Mr. Scalia during his time with Gibson Dunn, said the president's selection is good for the business community, which expected Mr. Acosta to do more to roll back regulations many see as costly for businesses.

Under Mr. Acosta, "there wasn't much movement with repealing regulations, and I know there was some frustration with employers at the speed of that," said Mr. Billok, adding that the

previous labor secretary took a “wait and see” approach. “I think Gene will be much more proactive in reviewing and repealing regulations.”

Mr. Scalia will likely face challenges being confirmed, Mr. Billock said.

“I would anticipate the Democrats in the Senate putting up as tough a fight as they can against the confirmation because he’s good for the business community,” he said.

Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., tweeted late Thursday that “workers and union members who believed (President Trump) when he campaigned as pro-worker should feel betrayed” and that the president “is missing an opportunity to nominate a fighter for workers, like a union member, to be America’s next Labor Secretary. Instead, he has again chosen someone who has proven to put corporate interests over those of worker rights.”

Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., also in a tweet called Mr. Scalia “an outstanding lawyer who has vigorously defended the Constitution over a long career in government and private practice. I’m confident he’ll be a champion for working Americans against red tape and burdensome regulation as Labor Secretary.”

Deputy Labor Secretary Patrick Pizzella has serving as the acting labor secretary since Mr. Acosta’s resignation.